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SIDED POSTER  
FREE INSIDE!**

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SEES #\*©K ALL  
OF WHAT I DO"  
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FROM THE HIP**

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THE AUSSIE ACE  
WHO'S MAKING  
IT BIG IN THE  
STATES**

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SIGNS OFF  
BRIT SX  
KICKS OFF!**

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WORLD-BEATING BIKES...**

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**WHEN THE BEST  
PREPARE FOR BATTLE,  
THEY CHOOSE THE *V3* HELMET.**





# CONTENTS

## Features

### 034 Star Turn!

Stefan Everts on living life through a lens

### 046 Blue Two UK EXCLUSIVE!

We test Yamaha's MX1 and MX2 world title winners

### 056

**A Year in the Dirt**  
Sneak preview of our 2006 calendar

### 060

**Lost and Found!**  
Multitek Honda's new French flier Pascal Leuret

### 086

**Back to the Future**  
Suzuki's '06 MXers ridden and rated

### 102 Red Baron

We ride Josh Coppins' British title-clinching CAS Honda

### 108 Smash Hit!

Aussie enduro ace Stefan Merriman on a season of ups and downs

### 112 Rainbow Warriors!

Geoff Walker gets to grips with next year's Gas Gas enduro weapons

### 118 Max Power!

Max Nagl - keeping German MX in the big time



### BLUE TWO!

With two world titles and a record of 17 top finishes in British Supercross and MX2, Yamaha's MX1 and MX2 are the most successful bikes in the world. We test them out for you.

By Steve Hogg and James Fox

Photos by James Fox

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### BIG BROTHER!

Meet the new breed of British Supercross riders. They're the ones who've taken the sport by storm and are now the new faces of the sport.

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## Regulars

### 06 News

Isle of Wight slips off GP calendar

### 019 Swordy

Stevie wins the Dutch title then feels the earth move in Japan

### 021

#### Crock Star

His contract's up and Gordy's looking forward to starting next year with a clean slate

### 023 Fast Eddy

Paul heads back to the States and takes in a round of the GNCC

### 025 Blarney

It's all systems go for the Belfast Odyssey Supercross

### 027 Rant

Write in and win!

### 030 Stuff

The latest off-road goodies for your bike, body n' babe!

### 072 Stateside

Brett Metcalfe interview, US Open of Supercross and Radio America



### PAID UP!

There's a cash prize waiting for you if you can win the 2006 US Open of Supercross. The prize is \$10,000. To win, you need to be the first rider to cross the finish line. The prize is \$10,000. To win, you need to be the first rider to cross the finish line.

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## Reports

### 128 Brit MX

The series signs off at Matchams where Coppins retains his title

### 134 WEC

Knighter's on top of the world

### 138 Sheffield SX

The Alessi brothers dominate as the British supercross season kicks off

### 092 MX Medical

Now's the time to start training for the 2006 season

### 094 Walker's World

Our big-chinned tech takes on a two-stroke top-end rebuild

### 124 Burnicle's Beat

Uncle Jack laments the loss of another classic track

### 154 Back Passage

New world enduro champ David Knight

### 149 Rage

Sheffield SX, Sam Davis and MX Top Trumps in our new-look youth section

December

2005

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RIDER









# Comment

**THIS TIME** of the year isn't called the silly season for nothing – and I'm not referring to the annual game of musical chairs as teams finalise their line-ups for '06. Nope, I'm talking about the ridiculous situation that we seem to find ourselves in every year regarding the various British SX championships.

No matter how much passion we all invest in the sport, there's no getting away from the fact that we're just an itty-bitty minnow in a huge sea of footie fans, cricket nuts, rugby fanatics etc etc etc. So what happens? We all pull together and get behind a single supercross series that's a sell-out success, helping to take the sport to that mythical 'next level' we all so much aspire to. My arse we do!

What actually happens is we have two rival series plus a stand-alone date in Belfast and lots of bad feeling as events clash and the potential audience is split every which way. I'm not pointing the finger at individuals – as far as I'm concerned anyone who's got the hairy boys to risk a fat wad of cash on running a SX deserves our support – but surely a bit of dialogue between the different parties wouldn't go amiss.

How about this for a revolutionary idea? Why doesn't the ACU – instead of stirring things up by firing off crappy letters to a venue that's due to host non-ACU-backed events – actually get all the interested parties together around a table and at least attempt to broker a ceasefire? The Maxxis MX championship doesn't rely on one organiser so why should our domestic supercross series? Think about it – a couple of rounds run by Future West at Sheffield and Cardiff, another two rounds staged by Events 22 in Belfast and RHL Activities pitching in with rounds at the NEC and, say, London's Excel Arena. It's not exactly rocket science...

Moving swiftly on to happier tidings and this month's comment wouldn't be complete without a huge slap on the back for David Knight. The mighty, meaty Manxman's made mincemeat (read it and weep Burnicle!) out of the best enduro riders on the planet to lift his first world title. So well done DK – we knew you had it in you!

*Sean*

*There will be no GP stars soaring above Gore Basin next season*



## LOW RIP!

**WITH THE** '06 MX1 championship dates finally released from the FIM HQ in Geneva it looks as though the final nail has been hammered into the coffin of the Gore Basin grand prix circuit – even though it was originally anticipated the event would run again on the August Bank Holiday.

This year's promoter – Motovision's Mark Chamberlain – is understandably disappointed with the outcome after being the main-man behind one of the most enjoyable GPs of '05. "Running the GP gave me as much satisfaction as anything else I've done in the last five or 10 years," says Mark. "The event was massive this year and a couple of weeks ago it was on the cards [that the GP would run again] but Youthstream have agreed to drop to 15 rounds for the teams and the event wasn't financially viable so the bottom line is that it's a mutual thing – for everyone – that we stopped."

With the date now seemingly struck from the calendar it's unlikely we'll see GP motocross on the Isle of Wight in the near future. "The biggest problem is the track and for motocross in general to lose a track like that," adds Mark. "We've done our best and we can't really do anymore."

But it's a double blow for Mark and the Motovision team as unavoidable cutbacks have also culled the squad's GP race efforts. "At the start of this year I decided that this would be the last year I would put the majority of the money up

**Arreton's gone from the '06 series schedule as Motovision are forced to pull the plug on their GP dreams**

for running the team," laments Mark. "I basically had to say 'right, that's it'. We'll go back GP racing if we can get the budget together to do it properly because we don't do it by halves and this year we skimped a little bit. You can't do that at world championship level and it was frustrating."

"It's difficult to walk away from running the team at GP level, that's really hard for me personally. I've got to be realistic rather than letting the passion override it like it has been doing for the past two years. Now I've got to bring it back in a little bit but I feel we've still got a lot to offer to British motocross."

There is some good news on the Motovision horizon though as Mark's able to confirm that Finnish charger Jussi Vehvilainen will be back in Britain in '06 for a full-throttle assault on the MX1 British title. "Jussi wants to do the British championship as well as the GNCC and we feel that we could offer him a good deal just to do the British then help him do the GNCC and selected races for Suzuki worldwide – it'll be good for the Suzuki brand if he can do well at different disciplines."

And backing up Jussi will be a pair of young guns who are sure to shake up some of the UK regulars. "We'll be running Jake Nicholls in British MX2 and the U21s and Neville Bradshaw again in MX1 and the British four-stroke championships as well as at selected GPs."

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RIDER

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# NEW VENUE FOR MXdN

**Farleigh gets the heave-ho as '06 Nations moves to Matterley**

**OOPS! LOOKS** like everyone jumped the gun a little – including event organisers Bike-it Promotions – with the announcement that the '06 MXdN would be held at the historic grassland GP circuit of Farleigh Castle.

"It would have been great to have held the event at Farleigh as originally announced," reckons co-organiser Steve Dixon. "But after witnessing over 40,000 spectators attending the Nations in France in September it's clear to see that the event has moved to a much higher level and Britain must continue to raise the bar."

With the Farleigh Castle circuit still stuck in the '80s and the local road network barely able to cope with its daily load of tractors – let alone the masses of vehicles an event of this size brings – a brand-new venue on the Matterley Estate, near Winchester, has been chosen to replace the Wiltshire circuit that last hosted the MXdN in 1980.

Matterley Estate has successfully hosted the Homelands music festival for the past several years and is easily accessible by road, rail and air. The venue already has a superb infrastructure in place which should help ensure the smooth running of both the des Nations and the British GP that's due to run on June 10/11.

The only thing the venue is missing at the moment is a GP standard race track but Johnny Douglas-Hamilton is set to invade the natural valley with his trusty machines to carve out a circuit that's jam-packed with modern and traditional features.

Keep an eye on the event website – [www.mxofnations.com](http://www.mxofnations.com) – for up to date info on the event, travel and ticket details.

## world mx champs

### '06 CALENDAR

Rnd 1	Zolder (Belgium)	April 2
Rnd 2	Bellpuig (Spain)	April 16
Rnd 3	Agueda (Portugal)	April 23
Rnd 4	Teutschenthal (Germany)	May 7
Rnd 5	Sugo (Japan)	May 21
Rnd 6	tba (Europe)	June 4
Rnd 7	Matterley (GB)	June 11
Rnd 8	tba (Italy)	June 18
Rnd 9	Uddevalla (Sweden)	July 2
Rnd 10	Sun City (South Africa)	July 16
Rnd 11	Loket (Czech Republic)	July 30
Rnd 12	Namur (Belgium)	August 6
Rnd 13	Desertmartin (Ireland)	August 27
Rnd 14	Lierop (Holland)	Sept 3
Rnd 15	Ernee (France)	Sept 17
MXdN	Matterley (GB)	Sept 24

# FUND-TASTIC!

**THE LAURIE** Squirrell Fund was swelled to the tune of £2100 by the Woodbridge practice day at Blaxhall organised by Lyn Berwick and Debbie Blyth. A whopping 120 riders – including Suzuki star Lewis Gregory – turned out and Woodbridge club press officer Charlie Ralph would like to say a big thanks to everyone who contributed to the day's success.

# DOMESTIC DOUBLE!

**AFTER A** slow start to the season – by his standards anyway – Graham Jarvis has come good in the end to regain the British trials title and take a record-equalling seventh Scott Trial victory. Graham wrapped up the British crown at the sixth and final round of the series staged by the Bradford club at Skyrakes before blitzing the Scott time and observation event at the end of October. Well done Grimbo!

**Grimbo forces his MRS Sherco to victory at this year's Scott Trial – the seventh time he's won the world famous event**



© Eric Kitchen

# LIZZARD IN LEATHERS!

**BRITISH MX1** champ Josh Coppins was just one of a shedload of MX stars who took to the Tarmac at the international Mettet Superbiker event in Belgium. The Kiwi banged bars with two-wheeled aces including new WSB champ Troy Corser and MX legend Stefan Everts and posted a very respectable 16-20 scorecard in his SM debut. "It's been a great experience," reckons Lizzard. "I'm pretty pumped with my results. I got better and better as the day went on and considering I had very little time to test before the race I think I did okay."



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**Cover: Tony Marshall  
rips up the track at our  
test of the '06 Suzukis  
(Sutty)**

**Contents main image:  
It's Tony again – only  
this time the busy little  
fella's testing Josh  
Coppins' CAS Honda  
(rayarcher.com)**



# HOT DATE!

## Europe's number one off-road show gets set for Stoneleigh

**EUROPE'S BIGGEST** off-road bike show kicks off at Stoneleigh Park on November 17 for four full days of brand new bikes, brand new kit, extreme trials displays, *mmmm* dancing girls and some Hungarian dude called Zoltan!

Visitors this year will be treated to three packed halls and the 1000-seater Live Action Arena plus some extra new features to keep things fresher than fresh.

A first this year is the virtual paddock outside the main halls designed to get show-goers in a race day mood with a collection of the top teams' trucks including the CAS Honda and Molson Kawasaki big-rigs.

The show's become the traditional end-of-season get-together for the off-road industry and visitors will get to rub shoulders with some of the sport's top stars as well as check out all the latest bikes.

If new machines are your thing then Hall 2 is the place to be with the Japanese Big Four out in force. Eye candy will include Honda's twin-pipe 250cc four-banger, Kawasaki's KXF450, Yamaha's alu-framed four-strokes and Suzuki's RM-Z450.

And the Euros will be doing their bit as well with another strong showing from KTM, some V-twin trickery courtesy of Aprilia, CCM's new flat-track inspired FT35, Husqvarna's '06 line-up and trials and enduro models from Gas Gas and Beta.

New exhibitors for '05 include Fox and the show will feature the UK debut of Berik's MX boot as worn by Ricky Carmichael. You can also check out the '06 ranges from off-road bigwigs including Thor, No Fear, CTI, Fro Systems, Alpinestars, Apico, Arai, 661, Wulfsport and Onfire.

Classic fans are well catered for with an area of Hall 3 dedicated to twinshockers and old iron including machines from Sammy Miller's extensive collection, a selection of back-in-the-day CCMs and assorted Bultaco and Maico machinery dating from 1960 onwards. There will also be a large selection of hideously hungover twinshock scrambling enthusiasts to be avoided like, er, a large selection of hideously hungover twinshock scrambling enthusiasts...

The Live Action Arena will feature minibike freestyle from gorgeous Gary Taylor and his hand-picked crack A-Team of miniature machine marvels plus Crosser and Clarky's X-Treme trials display and hardcore stupidity from MZ-mounted Zoltan 'Hound of Dracula' Angyal.

The Dirt Bike Show runs from November 17-20 at Stoneleigh Park, located off the A46 near Coventry between the M1, M6 and M40. Tickets cost £13.50 for adults and £7.50 for youths and senior citizens. Children under six get in for nowt. Parking is free and a full-colour show guide is included in the cost of admission.

For more information and advance booking ticket deals hook up to the website at [www.dirtbikeshow.co.uk](http://www.dirtbikeshow.co.uk) or call the advance ticket hotline on 0870 143 2208.

*Mmmmm, Kira...*







## THE DIRT BIKE SHOW. 2005 17-20 November Stoneleigh Park

### SHOW STOPPER!

WIN A PS2 AT THE  
DIRT BIKE RIDER STAGE

**THE LOVELY**, cuddly **dbt** team will be taking centre stage – literally – at the Dirt Bike Show as we take control of the Dirt Bike Rider Stage where you'll be able to check out the *mmmm* dancing girls and see star riders being interviewed.

But by far the best bit will be our MX vs ATV Unleashed PS2 challenge which runs across all four days of the show.

Thanks to our new bessie mates at THQ we've managed to bag a PS2 and a copy of the hottest MX game going. Visitors to the show will be able to take turns in posting a fast lap on a mystery track and whoever gets the best time over the course of the show will get to keep the game and the PS2. Simple but brilliant (just like our Rage editor only with 'but brilliant' added on the end)!

So when you get to the show swing by the Dirt Bike Rider Stage in Hall 3 – just follow the chorus of oohs and ahhs and you'll find us!







© Frank Hoppen

# SEB STEPS UP!

## Tortelli stars at Odyssey Arena

BELFAST'S ODYSSEY Arena is set to rock when international supercross makes its annual visit to Northern Ireland's #1 indoor events venue on November 25/26. An international entry of SX1 and SX2 competitors are already signed up and event promoter Matt Bates is still on the look out for more big names.

American's Downtown Mike Brown, Erik Vallejo, Daniel Sani and Josh Woods are all confirmed so far and they'll be up against Euro stars Sebastian Tortelli and Jussi Vehvilainen,

British boys Carl Nunn, Tommy Searle and Stuart Flockhart. But let's not forget the home boys...

Long time Odyssey favourites Gordon Crockard, Martin Barr, Phillip McCullough and Adam Lyons will be doing all they can to make a podium appearance in front of their home country folk in the series of heats and finals that run over both nights.

Half-time entertainment comes in the form of more two-wheeled wizardry courtesy of those

crazy freestylers and something brand-new for Odyssey fans – celebrity minibike racing. The minibike races will see road race stars Ryan Farquhar, Tom Sykes, Johnny Rea and Craig Jones taking on BBC sports presenter Stephen Watson and ex GP MXer Phil Neill.

Racing starts at half seven on both nights and tickets are on sale now through the Odyssey box office on **028 9073 9074** or online at [www.ticketmaster.ie](http://www.ticketmaster.ie). For more information check out [www.belfastsupercross.com](http://www.belfastsupercross.com)



# FUTURE FEST!

## Supercross series calls in at Cardiff

**THE FUTURE** West supercross series make its second stop of the '05 tour at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium on December 3.

The Alessi brothers headline the Pro class entry and although no other major international names have signed up as we go to press, FWSX's Lester Johnson assures us there are big dollar contracts being waved under the noses of some big, big name riders who'll be more than ready to rip it up against our home heroes.

As well as the Pro riders there'll be massive line-ups in both the youth and amateur divisions. The kids are battling it out for the Future West World Supercross championship title and entries are bulging.

Spectator seats are filling up fast too but the Millennium Stadium is massive and there's plenty of room for everyone so bring your mates and family along to enjoy one of the true British supercross spectacles of 2005. Tickets are available by calling **08705 582 582** or by heading to **www.ticketmaster.co.uk**

For more info on the event and all the latest gossip and rider signings check out **www.fwsx.com**



**FOUR WEEKS** before this year's Red Bull X-Fighters, 21-year-old Nate 'The Destroyer' Adams – or Nate 'El Destructor' Adams as he's known locally (if you're in Spain) – was nursing a thigh injury that had put him out of action for almost a year. Was it the pull of the huge crowd that got him back in the saddle for the event or the thought of joining a line-up of other big name riders from the world of FMX?

Clearly in the running for the biggest name at this annual event was Kenny 'The Cowboy' Bartram who like Nate boasts a whopping 21 letters in his name. Who will win the battle of the big names? Who will reign in Spain? Tune into Extreme Sports Channel on December 10 at 10pm to find out.



# WIN!WIN!WIN!

## VIP supercross prize package

**FANCY A** night watching all the action at Britain's biggest supercross, then bedding down in a comfy Cardiff hotel courtesy of our bestest Canadian buddies at Future West?

If you do then read on...

To win this VIP prize package for you and your family all you have to do is answer this stupidly easy question! Who won the Pro 125 class at last year's Cardiff Supercross?

A) Glen Phillips B) Mike Alessi C) Jeff Alessi D) Ivan Tedesco

When you've got the answer figured out in your head scrawl it down on a postcard or something similar then send it – with your name, addy and phone number – to: I Wanna go to Cardiff Dude, **dbf**, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe, Lancashire LA4 4AG. Entries close on November 25 and the first correct answer drawn out of the **dbf** hat wins the VIP package.

## An Alessi brothers SX school

**DO YOU** ever feel that you're losing control or the power your bike's supplying is less than electrifying? If that's the case then it sounds like you better shape up because we need a man – or woman – to win our latest awesome Alessi brothers competition courtesy of Future West.

The Alessis arrived at the Sheffield Supercross and beat off all-comers in fine style and they'll probably do the same at the Cardiff Millennium Stadium round on December 3 – but what's the secret to their supercross success?

Well, if you want to find out we're offering one lucky reader the chance to take an afternoon's schooling from both boys the day before the Cardiff race. You'll need your own bike and race kit and you'll also need to bring an affiliated race licence with you in your name for any of the following organisations – AMCA, YMSA, BSMA, BYMX, ORPA or ACU.

If you've got all of the above and you can get yourself to Cardiff on December 2 then feel free to have a crack at answering this question and entering our comp!

According to Mike and Jeff's website – **www.alessiracing.com** – Mike's favourite movies are Rocky and Rocky II but he also claims to like another movie. Which of the following cinemagraphic classics is it?

A) Naked Lunch B) Breakfast at Tiffany's C) Grease D) The Last Supper

When you think you know the answer jot it down on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope along with your name, address and a daytime telephone number then send it to us as at: School Comp, **dbf**, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe, Lancashire LA4 4AG. Entries close on November 25 and the first correct answer drawn out of the hat wins the schooling session.

## CTi Morph knee braces

**MOTOCROSS IS** a rough, tough sport and quality protection like these CTi Morph knee braces usually come at premium prices – or in the case of the Morph £595 which in our opinion is a cracking deal for such a quality product. But for those of you who want to hold on to your pennies **dbf** have teamed up with Technology In Motion to give you the chance to win a pair of Morphs!

To be in with a shout of winning these amazing knee braces all you have to do is answer this simple question or already be a fully paid up member of Team **dbf**. Yes, that's right – every single Team **dbf** member will automatically have their names chucked into the draw too!

But if you're not a member then you'll need to answer this simple question. Starting from our January '05 issue how many different British CTi-sponsored racers have graced the front cover this year?

A) 4  
B) 13  
C) 11  
D) zero  
E) The Alps

When you've got the answer write it down on the back of a postcard, sealed envelope or a pitta bread along with your name, address and a daytime telephone number and send it to: Morph Me!, **dbf**, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe, Lancashire LA4 4AG. Entries close on December 8 with the first correct entry drawn winning the braces!







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# METZ FLIPS!

'Blue skies smilin' at me,  
Nothin' but blue skies do I see...'  
...unless, like Mike Metzger here,  
you're upside down and desperately  
trying to spot your landing!

Photo by Frank Hoppen

## INSIDE JOB!

Supercross from three places  
beginning with 'B' – that's  
Bercy, Birmingham and  
Belfast – plus indoor  
enduros in Barcelona  
and Las Vegas baby!







# next MONTH

## NEVILLE BRADSHAW

The Beast from the South East

**Plus...** '06 YZ250F on test, Dirt Bike Show special, all the usual columns, a few more features and a bunch of other good stuff that we've not thought of yet



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***"When I crossed the line I was the new Dutch champion - it was a great feeling and a good end to a not-so-perfect season. It wasn't as good a feeling as when I won my first British championship but it still felt good!"***



## Earth mover!

**Swordy samples some Japanese earthquake action and wraps up the Dutch motocross title at Mill**

WITH THE season coming to an end I had one last stop in Holland for the final round of the Dutch championship. The race was held at a place called Mill - I'd been there before but that was almost six years ago when I was riding for the MJ Church team. Even though it was so long since I'd last been the track was exactly the same. Sand of course but still a nice track.

I had a healthy lead over second place in the championship but threw most of that away in the first race. I had a big crash on the first lap over a big jump and I was lucky not to injure myself. The bike was okay too so I could continue.

The second race went much better. I got a good start, found a good rhythm and when I crossed the line I was the new Dutch champion. It was a great feeling and a good end to a not-so-perfect season. It wasn't as good a feeling as when I won my first British championship but it still felt good.

I'm looking forward to coming back to race the British championship next year. With the Dutch race being my last on the 250F we started testing on the 450 ready for next season. I stayed in Holland for a few days before the team and I jumped on a plane to race the last round of the Japanese championships.

The testing we did out there went very well and I was really looking forward to my first race on the 450 but the track was in a right mess with all the rain they'd had the night before. They even had to cut out some parts of the track because we couldn't get round.

I had a couple of good rides but I couldn't get used to the concrete start at all so I had to come through the pack. All the Japanese guys at Kawasaki made us very welcome and took great care of us while we were there.

There was nothing much exciting happening out in Japan aside from the one night when I was in my hotel watching a bit of TV when the room started shaking, then the TV itself started to shake. It took me a while to register that I'd just experienced a small earthquake. I was a bit shocked but it only lasted for about 20 seconds.

After I got back home I took a couple of days off to get over the jetlag before I headed up to the show at the NEC. I had a good chat there with two of Kawasaki's road racing men - Chris Walker and Shinya Nakano.

I've met Chris a few times before and I knew he'd done a bit of motocross to keep himself fit. He was asking about the 450F because he's thinking about getting one for the winter. Shinya is a good guy too and with him being Japanese I shared the tales from my trip to Japan with him.



He also rides a motocross bike to keep himself fit and admitted that he thinks motocross is much more difficult than road racing. I agree but I do have a lot of respect for the Tarmac guys going down straights and taking corners at the kind of speeds they do.

Things are pretty quiet for me at the moment and there's just time to have a few weeks rest before firing up the winter training programme. I've got a couple of schoolboy club presentations that I've been asked to present the trophies at so maybe I'll see some of you there. If not, good luck with what you're doing and have fun!

See ya!

*Stephen Sword #1*

Words by Stephen Sword Photo by Suttly

SWORDY



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***"I can't say a lot about my plans at this stage but I would like to think they'll have a positive effect on my racing approach which in time will produce results that will speak volumes about who I am, what I want and what I can do"***



## Double ender!

**The race season and Gordy's contract with Steve Dixon are over so what's lined up next for the Crock Star?**

HELLO MY fellow motocross people and thank you for reading! Let me begin by officially declaring the off-season open. So now we can look forwards to a few bike shows, prize givings, indoor supercross events, season review DVDs to watch, Christmas shopping to think about, dark nights and cold weather...

If you've been following the world and British championships this year you'll know that I haven't got to worry about organising any championship parties this winter. A year ago I wouldn't have predicted my season to turn out the way it has and now I feel better to move on and enter 2006 with a few key changes in place.

I can't say a lot about my plans at this stage but I would like to think they'll have a positive effect on my racing approach which in time will produce results that will speak volumes about who I am, what I want and what I can do.

I attended a fund-raising event at Desertmartin with the proceeds going to help Neil McKeown after his accident dramatically changed daily life for him.

Schoolboys, quads and adults all got two races with the second having a Le Mans style start where you had to run the whole length of the start straight before mounting your bike and firing it into life before heading off around the first turn. The race ended by dropping your bike at the final turn and then stripping off all your gear and then legging it up to the finish line in just your underpants. What a sight!

Afterwards an auction was held in the beer tent and many items were up for grabs including a signed Pichon shirt from 2003 which I decided would be nice to have as I raced closely with him at the German GP that year. Head shaving, leg waxing and other such antics were also going on but I shied away from those as you can understand.

The final round of the British championship was on the next weekend at Matchams and as always – according to Steve Dixon – the sun was shining. I got a good start off the line in the first race which put me around the corner in fourth place. Some guy was in front of me and he kindly crashed out on the second jump and I had no choice but to land on his bike. Thanks!

Now I was 20th or so, four laps later I was fifth and was happy with my progress until I clashed with a backmarker and ended up under both bikes. Nice! A sore elbow, a dead arm and a very twisted bike was the end result and I nursed it home to the finish somewhat unamused.

In the second race I made a Horlicks of the first corner and left myself about 10th to then push my way forward up to fifth or so before getting blinded by the sun and going off line into the biggest bumps known to man. A headshake to tankslapper to flying W to kiss of death to no-hander-lander

combo was pulled off before I completed the move with an old school headplant. It was Travis and the Nitro Circus material for sure but not British championship winning ingredients at all. I lost some places but it fired me up enough to come back to fourth at the flag.

After Matchams I drove over to Belgium where I was competing in the 19th annual Mettet Superbiker event. I had some practice at Spa Francorchamps on the Thursday at their kart track. Troy Corser was also there as well as a few other road race guys who I didn't know so well.

Like most supermoto tracks Mettet didn't have a lot of off-road and the off-road section was rock hard and smooth anyway so the Tarmac guys were gonna be hard to beat.

I wasn't fortunate enough to have my friend Gibber – from Russell's – to help me out with the mechanicing this time. At the Irish world round at Bishopscourt he helped greatly with prepping the bike and setting it up for the track but I was on my own here.

In one of the practice sessions I was behind Patrick Caps when he lost the use of his brakes and went straight on at full speed into a barrier. He was hurt quite badly and

spent the weekend in hospital. The track is around the streets and public roads which pass by houses, a petrol station, pub, chip shop and other general town features. On race day around 20 to 30,000 fans came out to watch – the atmosphere was fantastic.

On my way back from Belgium I called in to Oakley HQ in London and James who I deal with there kindly treated us to a tour of the building and a spot of lunch. I got to see many of their new products and was able to catch up on things with James who I normally only get to talk to on the phone or meet at races when I'm usually too focussed on the job in hand to talk properly so a visit was well overdue.

When I got back home I entered the Tommy Stewart Memorial at Crossgar. It's a famous old scrambles track which my dad even rode in his day. I managed to holeshot and win all my races which won me the overall and trophy. It's 56 years old and names such as Vic Allan, Willie Simpson, Roger Harvey, Lawrence Spence, Alan Morrison, Paul Chambers and Brian Steele all feature on it.

My most recent activity was a fund-raising training school for the MXdN this year. The Dundalk club let us use their track which was greatly appreciated and held up to the rain okay. I think the pupils improved well and I had a lot of fun working with them on the track. Thanks to all of you who supported us on the day and I hope your results benefit from what you learned.

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by raychuss.com

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***"After leaving the first pit I got carried away in one of the wooded sections and ended up parking the CR250 in the middle of a bush but I was soon out of it and on my way"***



## US return

**Paul flies out to the States for a one-off ride in the GNCC series**

WELL I'VE just got back from the grand old USA where I competed in the final round of the GNCC series. After being away for four years it was nice to go back and see all my old friends – although the event itself was pretty tough.

The trip was supported by Paul Rowlands and after a lot of consideration I decided that I should go back and give it a whirl. The real reason I went back to the US was to see how fast the boys are – and I now know that they're pretty fast and that Salminen is his usual dominant and speedy self.

The course itself proved to be a great lap with lots of technical sections, very similar to the Ellesmere Fast Eddy but only a little bit longer. It was interesting to see that the courses are very similar to ours other than they managed to create laps that were nearly 30 minutes long.

The start – like in most races – is very important and after having a bad pick on the gate due to not competing in the championship I managed to kick the girl into life and round the first corner in second position.

I followed Salminen into the woods and he managed to pull about 15 seconds on me on the first lap, 10 on the second lap and kept increasing his lead until he was 40 seconds in front after about an hour and 20 minutes. Bad news for me though was, as I didn't have a fast fill system, I had to resort to the old screw top tank which meant I lost even more time to him at the pit stops.

After leaving the first pit I got carried away in one of the wooded sections and ended up parking the CR250 in the middle of a bush but I was soon out of it and on my way. The downside to this is that without my unscheduled diversion I would have ended up in a podium position but fourth isn't so bad. Hopefully next time will be better and all in all it was a great event and it's looking like I'll be doing some more in '06.

Speaking of next year my plans are changing. As a team and rider I can no longer afford to participate in the WEC championship. The costs from the last two seasons have made it difficult to make it work and I feel that next season will be even more expensive.

My plan now for '06 will be to concentrate on the UK scene for PAR Honda and also try to do as many GNCC races as possible. I'll also be slowing down on the team front and handing the title sponsor over to Paul at PAR which will enable me to focus purely on my own riding. I feel I've still got a good few years left and while I'm as competitive as I seem to be I will be giving it my all to show that for 36 years of age I ain't bad for an old 'un.

Remaining races for this year will be the John Banks BEC and, wait for it, the NEC Supercross where I hope to come home in one piece but we'll see. It will be good to support Gareth Hockey as he puts a lot into our sport.

See you next month...



Words by Paul Edmondson Photo by Jonty Edmunds

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***"Headliners Sebastien Tortelli, Mike Brown and a pack of new American superstars will be faced with no less than two '05 GP winners - Billy Mac and Carl Nunn - and the home fans should have plenty to cheer about too!"***



## Belfast or bust!

**International SX is returning to the Emerald Isle this month and the excitement's almost too much for Stevie to handle...**

IF THE dark nights are starting to get you down and Saturdays come and go without the turn of a wheel then you're suffering withdrawal symptoms from that addiction we call motocross. And the only known cure is a healthy helping of pure 100 per cent adrenaline – aka international SX.

Luckily, help is at hand as the boys are back in town for the Belfast Odyssey SX on November 25/26 and tickets are getting pretty scarce at the time of writing. Flamboyant entrepreneur – and boss of Events 22 – Matt Bates has searched the globe in order to surpass the phenomenal success of Odyssey 2004.

Headliners Sebastien Tortelli, Mike Brown and a pack of new American superstars will be faced with no less than two '05 GP winners – Billy Mac and Carl Nunn – and the home fans should have plenty to cheer about too! Returning to form, Gordon Crockard has missed out on the top rung of the Odyssey long enough and what an end to the season that would be for the Newtownards man – and what a great way to mark his intentions for 2006.

Never short of confidence, Adam Lyons may have slicks ordered for a supermoto challenge in the future but for now he's intent on climbing the podium in front of his many fans. And Phillip McCullough makes his return to the Odyssey aboard the four-stroke 250 KTM and with new Moto-One team-mate Wayne Garrett alongside there could be fireworks.

The new kids on the block have graduated. Martin Barr has broken top five in the British championship, scored GP points and won the Ulster Premier Championship – in short, this kid could upset the form book at the Odyssey. GOMX rider and Ulster MX2 winner Robert Hamilton has signed for a season racing the British series and will make his debut in the MX1 class at the Belfast arena. And this just in – Shaun Simpson will be racing as well.

After much speculation, Gordon Crockard has penned a deal for 2005 that will see him head an Irish-based GP team. Formally known as Team Lizard, the Roger Magee-guided outfit will run under Wulfsport Honda livery in 2006 with Crockard in MX1 and Ulster's adopted son, Shaun Simpson, ready to make his mark in MX2. A total of five riders will compete under the Wulfsport banner with Scott Probert, Adam McKee and Gary Magee racing British and Irish championships on 450 and 250cc machinery.

The following subject is as important as it gets but it's one that we all seem to avoid, fearfully hiding our heads in



*Can Dyno light up the Odyssey at this year's supercross spectacular?*

the sand in the hope it just might go away – well it won't! If we (and that includes YOU) don't get together with the MRA/MCCNI and just about anyone else with clout then our sport will be reduced to 'back in the day' memories.

What I am saying here is we are losing our tracks one by one. Work it out – the less tracks that there are available, the more racing will be on each track and the more complaints will arise until the offending circuit is closed down.

If we don't get together and use the skills that we have at our disposal – in the media, legal profession, people who work for councils etc – our sport is facing a serious threat. If you consider the only option is to race supermoto it might just raise your motivation level!

See you at the Odyssey...

PS Check out [www.motocross.ie](http://www.motocross.ie) – a website that's helping promote our sport in Southern Ireland.

Words by Stevie Mills Photo by Alex Hodgkinson

BELAFNEY

Stevie





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## GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? Well here's where you should be saying it...

### Daz challenge!

Hello there guys! I've been riding now for over a year and I'm purely addicted to anything to do with motocross – especially **dbt**!

The only thing I suffer with is my riding position. The reason I suffer is because I'm 6'4" and after riding for a couple hours my back feels if it's breaking as I'm bending over so far. I have Carmichael-bend Fatbars and was told these would help but I'm asking if there's any special kind of raising piece that might help.

I heard through the old grapevine that Ken de Dycker has some kind of raiser as he is tall too.

**Darren, Surrey**

We reckon the best set-up for a circus freak like yourself is to get a taller seat foam and some Bud racing triple clamps with Kevin Windham-bend handlebars.

Alternatively you could use some handlebar raisers that bolt directly on to the stock clamps – these come in sizes from 20mm up to 50mm lift. We've never tried them and so we can't personally say if they're good or not but they're available from most motorcycle stores or [www.mandp.co.uk](http://www.mandp.co.uk) where you'll find them by doing a product search. If you don't fancy those you could maybe try and track down some super-high CR-bend handlebars.

Also remember that when you raise your handlebars you're increasing the distance the control cables have to reach so make sure your throttle, clutch and front brake all work properly before you go riding.

### Fox hunter!

This is probably a very weird request but here goes... We've just read your August 2005 issue and my children have fallen in love with the kit that the rider on page 42 [Tony Marshall] is wearing (he's testing the '06 KTM 250F). They also like the kit that Carl Nunn is wearing in the Back Passage bit.

However, I can't seem to find it anywhere.

I've tried on [foxeurope.com](http://foxeurope.com) and various online stores – do you think that you'll be able to let me know where I could get some kit like that? We're not really in the know as we are in Zimbabwe but my parents do live in London and I'd like them to send us some kit for Christmas.

**Natasha, Zimbabwe**

*The kit you're looking for is the Strafer range that should be available from any Fox dealer right about now – if your old dears are struggling to find it get them to give Fox Europe a call on 0191 487 6100 and they'll point them in the right direction. Nunny's kit is similar to Tony's but is actually a size or two bigger and is the '05 02 jersey with the 360 pant.*

### Heaven bound?

I'm a man in Sweden who wants to come in contact with Stefan Elvin from MX Heaven. I know you've written about him in the magazine and I wonder if you can help me with a phone or fax number so I can contact him. I hope that you can help me.

**Ove, Sweden**

You can contact the sensual Swedish meatball Stefan Elvin by telephone on 001 951 657 0610 by fax on 001 951 657 0460 or even by email at [mxheavenusa@yahoo.com](mailto:mxheavenusa@yahoo.com) – good luck and happy hunting!

### Pink poser

I don't want to sound like a ghey or nothing but pink goggles really float my boat. What are my options when it comes to getting my hands on some man-size flouro pink goggles?

**Dave, Lincolnshire**  
PS Unicorns kick ass!

*It seems that flouro pink is this season's new black and a handful of goggle manufacturers all produce pimpin' pink peeper protectors. The ones we can think of off the*

### Crash course!

My son Jamie has just had a big off at Tony Moto in Winchester and the poor kid knocked himself out and cracked his helmet (full credit to the on-site medical team who were great). He's feeling a bit sorry for himself so it would be great if you could print a picture or say get well soon or something.

**Mark and Sylvie, via email**



*Jamie, get well soon or something dude! Hope this pic cheers you up and that a super-swish Shoei kitbag helps with the recovery time...*

*top of our heads are – in alphabetical order – Utopia, Spy, Dragon and Scott.*

*If you can't find any at your local dealer it might be worth checking out what deals are going down at the Dirt Bike Show that runs at Stoneleigh from November 17-20.*

### Future fun

I'm writing to thank Lester and the team at Future West for a fantastic day out at Sheffield Arena on October 22. Meeting the Alessi brothers who are two great guys (and talented riders), getting two full outfits, photos and autographs just completed the day. Can't wait to see the excellent racing in Cardiff. Keep up the brill work you all do at **dbt** and once again a big fat thanks to Lester!

**Sue and family, West Yorkshire**

*Glad you had fun! Check out this month's news section for another frickin' great FWSX comp where everyone who enters is in with a chance of bagging a reet grand prize package.*



## LETTERSWINPRIZES

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*Write to Rant at the usual address or email us at [rant@dirtbikerider.co.uk](mailto:rant@dirtbikerider.co.uk)*

*All letters/emails must be accompanied by a full address.*

*Oh, and please don't send emails all in capitals. Cheers!*



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## OAKLEY THUMP-2

Have you ever found yourself thinking 'man, I sure wish my iPod protected my eyes from all UV light and stuff' or 'dude, how cool would it be if I could play banging tunes on my sunnies'? No, me either but that could be because my train of thought rarely passes the 'mimimim, what's for din dins' stage.

But anyhow, someone somewhere has been thinking long and hard about combining the benefits of wearing cool peeper-protection and being able to listen to digital music on-the-go - and that someone just happens to work for Oakley.

After coming up with the - maybe too - futuristic looking 'Thump' some time ago the Oakley design team decided to have a re-think and mount their 'state-of-the-art digital audio engine' on this summer's best selling Oakley eye product - the Gascan, which is already a firm favourite with top MX racers Tyla Ratray, Stefan Everts and Sully.

The Thump-2 is available with either white or black frames - with prescription lenses if you need 'em - and comes with 256MB, 512MB or 1GB memory options so in theory you can carry up to 240 of your favourite tunes! And get this, they only weigh 50 grams - that's less than your average CD case - so you're definitely not gonna get a crock neck from wearing these puppies.

Price: from £199-£299

Supplier: oakley.com

01462 475400

## DEP CRF250 TWIN EXHAUST

If you want more power but less noise from your zero-six two-fiddy-f Honda then you might want to be contacting British pipe manufacturer DEP. Craig (he's the bollocks) and the boys (they're the bollocks) have been burning the midnight oil in order to deaden the decibels, save a little weight and still release yet more ponies from said machine while still keeping the zooster pipe looking pretty dang sleek!

The power delivery the pipe produces pretty much follows the same curve of the stocker but is much beefier throughout with a peak gain of approximately three horsepower coming in at around the mark of 11 grand. And all the mentalists of the enviro persuasion will be glad to know that the pair of easily repackable pipes run well under the FIM's 96db limit. Yay!

Price: £480

Supplier: deppipes.com

01622 765353



## DIRT BIKE RIDER 2006 CALENDAR

It beats us why anyone would want a perforated dbr-branded bowl-shaped kitchen utensil that's primarily used for draining off liquids and rinsing food. With that in mind we've dumped plans to release an '06 colander and concentrated on this - our '06 calendar.

There are 13 stunning images and we've name-checking every single day of the 2006 year. Interesting but true #32: You can't spell calendar without ale - hic!

Price: £5.99

Supplier: dirtbikerider.com

01524 834030

## SKIN INDUSTRIES GOTH CRF50 GRAPHICS

We like Skin Industries graphics because they make us happy - not as happy as cheese beans, toe, fluorescent lights or etch-a-sketch but certainly happier than cheap coffee, onion ring flavoured corn snacks and tight-fitting polyester underwear which all sadden us somewhat.

Not saddening us somewhat are Jeff and the guys at Freestyle Xtreme. That's because they're the folks responsible for bringing Skin graphics to the UK as well as Metal Mulisha, Balls Deep and West Coast Choppers goodies too - good work people!

Price: £49.99 bike not included

Supplier: freestylextreme.com

01249 465736







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### OVS-PRO RC REPLICA BOOTS

The winningest boots of the 2005 AMA season are finally available to buy in this country thanks to Berik's brand-new UK importer Moto Direct.

The full-grade kangaroo hide boots come in sizes 7-13 and feature fully adjustable aluminium buckles, anatomic gelfoam internal padding, heavy duty molded calf protection, OVS ankle hinges and double stitched replaceable soles and were developed throughout the season by pint-sized phenom Ricky Carmichael.

If you're interested in trying a pair head to Moto Direct's stand at the Dirt Bike Show and Bully and the boys will get you fitted up in no time.

Price: £249.99  
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# Star turn!

**He's world famous in his chosen sport and a household name in his native Belgium – but just how does Stefan Everts deal with life in the media's glare?**

Words by Jonty Edmunds Photos by Roddy MacLeod

**AS THE** number one rider on the MXGP scene today everyone wants to know what Stefan Everts thinks. Be it about an upcoming race, being the world championship's most successful rider ever or simply how qualifying went – you name it, Everts gets asked it...year on year.

But dealing with the media is something Everts, like most top sporting stars, has learned to handle. And as well as knowing the importance of communicating well with the media in order to promote himself and his sponsors professionally, Everts – unlike most motocross riders – also has to deal with being a sporting celebrity in his home country. That means daily national media coverage and being recognised in the street.

In this interview the nine-time world champ talks candidly about his relationship with the media and how he deals with fame before reflecting on the 2005 season.



*The coolest thing a sponsor did for Stefan this season? His special Acerbis race shirt gets Everts' vote...*





*Sewing the world title up at Lierop was an extra special moment for Stefan*

**db:** Stefan, you must have given thousands of interviews over the years. Do you ever find yourself struggling to say exactly what it is you want to?

**SE:** "I've never had too many problems doing interviews for magazines but as soon as there was a TV camera and a microphone I would freeze when I was younger. I couldn't express myself that well. Also, when I speak Flemish I have a strong accent and I was a little bit ashamed of that early in my career. I remember that the first time I went to a live TV studio I was with Eric Geboers so he jumped in a few times to help me. It certainly wasn't easy for me then."

**db:** Did you ever have any sort of training to deal with the media?

**SE:** "I never had any advice or training about dealing with the media and that was a mistake. If I could start my career again I would have

gone to media school so that I could learn to be more relaxed in front of a camera and to express myself better. I know now that I have to be positive – a leader – when I am in front of a TV audience. You can't be a shy guy because then you aren't having a positive reaction on the public. It took me many years to be like I am now – to be able to express myself clearly and effectively.

"Joel Smets is so natural in front of a camera, he talks openly and honestly. That has always been his strong point against me. It is very important to come across well in interviews and on TV and I figured it out about six years ago. You have to sell yourself to the fans, sponsors and the press. If you don't know how to sell yourself you aren't going to have a lot of attention, which means you won't have a lot of fans or sponsors."

**db:** Is honesty always the best policy when being interviewed?

**SE:** "I don't have to deal with all the questions that I get asked but I just try to explain as clearly as I can what I think about whatever I am asked. I think that it is important to say how it really is, not trying to make excuses.

"I think you have to be honest but in a diplomatic way. I think people respect you more if you say 'I made a mistake'. Joel is the perfect example of not doing this – he has been having what I would call a lot of excuses. I think that it is important to say it like it is."

**db:** Have you ever said anything to the media that you regret?

**SE:** "At one point in my career I was too open with the press. I had a lot of confidence at that time and I would say things like 'on Sunday I'm going to win two heats'. I know now that



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you can't say that because it comes across that you are arrogant. It is better to say that you feel good, that you are looking forward to the race.

"You have to find ways of letting the press know that you are feeling good and enjoying the race without saying that you think you can win. If you do it also puts more pressure on you."

**dbr:** How do you feel you get treated by the specialist motocross magazines across Europe?

**SE:** "They have always treated me well and haven't been saying that I have been big-headed or that I am a dickhead, even during the period of my career when I was a little too confident. I had my bad years but even then I have been treated with respect."

**dbr:** What about the US press?

**SE:** "The US press sees \*\*\*k all of what I do. They arrive at the des Nations and that's pretty much it. This year's des Nations was the worst race I did all year and that is all that some of them get to see. What they would write used to frustrate me but now I don't let it bother me anymore. They don't seem to get what I try to say or do. Of course when they see you many of them talk very differently but they just don't write it."

"There is very little in the US press about GP racing. Racer X has some cool stories from the GPs – they have one soon about me and Ricky because we both won nine titles and 87 races – but generally the US press don't really follow GP racing. I'm not bothered, I concentrate on selling myself in Europe and I don't worry about what is happening over there."

**dbr:** Most motocross riders don't have to deal with daily national press in the way footballer players or F1 drivers do. How do the Belgian press treat you?

**SE:** "The Belgium press doesn't build up sports people and then knock them down like newspapers in some countries do – they just don't work that way."

"There was one point that Joel and I had some problems but we cleared that up and the journalist that wrote the story which started it all admitted that he had added some salt and pepper to his story. You just don't do that and he knows that now."

**dbr:** Exactly how much interest do the Belgian daily newspapers take in you and what you do?

**Stefan shows the strain at Loket**



profile

**A long, hard season kicked off at Zolder**

**SE:** "Every week I have the daily newspapers calling me, which is good because there is almost always something about me and about motocross in them. For example my local newspaper normally runs one page before a race and the same afterwards depending on where the GP is. The other newspapers run something a little smaller but always run something. When I won the world title this year I was on the front page of a national Belgian newspaper."

**dbr:** Every rider suffers from negative press once in a while. How do you deal with it?

**SE:** "That is something that can be hard to control because once I have done something and the press have seen it then they will write about what they have seen. But I can control what I say. I got some bad headlines about what happened with Pichon last year but I was able to try and explain things from my point of view."

"Someone would have to write something really bad about me for me to want to speak to them about it. I remember that in '93 someone wrote \*\*\*t about me and hadn't even spoken to me which made me mad at the time. It was in a

motocross magazine but it didn't last long so that pleased me."

**dbr:** At the end of a long day at the races do you ever think 'oh no, not another interview'?

**SE:** "I like to do interviews and talk about the sport that I love. I never think 'oh no, not another interview'. I am a professor in my job. I still enjoy speaking about it. If you don't then you are lacking some passion for the sport. If I am out having some fun – maybe at a party – and people want to talk about racing then that's different. There is a time and a place. If I have a beer in my hand at the end of the season and some fans start to talk to me about racing I say 'hey, come on, leave me alone with the questions and let's have some fun'."

**dbr:** Do you sometimes find yourself holding back what you really want to say?

**SE:** "I have to hold back sometimes. In my case if you saw what happened in South Africa last year...if another rider did that they would not get punished as much. Because I was the first I got a big, big penalty. I know that I have to avoid negative press at all costs."

"I have to be careful of everything that I



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do – like getting a big speeding ticket or something like that because for sure that would be in the newspapers in Belgium. You have responsibilities, even if I don't like it sometimes I have to deal with it because it is part of what I am and what I do. I have to remember that I get paid to do what I love and that kids look up to me so I have to try and set the best example I can."

**db:** Due to the mainstream popularity of motocross in Belgium and the fact that you are so often in the news, you are a recognisable sporting celebrity there. When did you first realise that you had become a celebrity?

**SE:** "Pretty early on in my career people started to know who I was. After '98 when I lost the title to Tortelli my popularity grew which I wasn't expecting. From losing I became more popular in Belgium [laughs]. The way that I lost, by falling and then sitting there and crying and with

my dad being there as well, it was a very special moment that helped me connect with people in Belgium. I leaned then that it doesn't always have to be because of a victory for people to like you. That moment made a big difference."

**db:** Being recognised in the street by members of the public is something that most motocross riders will never have to worry about. Is it weird to deal with?

**SE:** "Sometimes when I go shopping I can see and hear people saying 'look that's Stefan Everts' or 'hey, did you forget to bring your bike' just so that they can say something. That makes me a little crazy sometimes. Knowing what it can be like for me sometimes, when it's not even fun to cross the street because of other people recognising me, I would not want to be Brad Pitt or Bono or a big movie star – ever. I just try and laugh with it because they

see this 'hero' that they only see on TV and that's me – Stefan Everts. I'm just the guy who lives around the corner, I stink on the toilet too!

"Most of the people are too scared to come up to me but most of the ones that do say something stupid. That's when I think to myself 'shut up' if you don't have something constructive to say."

**db:** Does being a Belgian sporting celebrity have plus points as well as negative points?

**SE:** "There are a lot of really positive things that come with being recognised and popular. I can get a good table in a restaurant for example. But sometimes I find that so unfair – why should I get it and not someone else? That's how life is – the water goes to the sea but there is already lots of water there, why doesn't it go to the deserts? It makes my life easier sometimes though."

**db:** But what about your real fans, what is it like spending time with them?

**SE:** "Although it can sometimes get a little too much I like being around my fans on race day because it helps me relax. I don't let myself get too tense thinking about the racing. If I focus on the race too much I pump-up which is not good for my racing."

**db:** Does living in Monaco, away from people that recognise you and want to spend time with you, help you to relax?

**SE:** "Things started there because of tax reasons but because I have less friends there I can chill out and relax more easily. If I am in Belgium there is always someone wanting to do something, I have a full schedule every day if I want. In Monaco I do my training and then relax – sometimes I need to do nothing and re-charge my batteries."

**db:** What advice would you give to up and coming riders with regards to the press?

**SE:** "Always make sure you have time for the press and sell yourself by being honest and talking openly about stuff. Be interesting in

**Stefan and his son Liam share the spotlight at Lierop**







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a good way and believe in yourself. Ben Townley is so good with the media because he is really relaxed and natural. If you are a shy person you need to work on being more open because people might think that you are just a boring person or that you don't really care about what you are doing. Learn from riders that are good with the media and doing interviews."

**dbr:** What is the best thing about being MX1 world champion in '05?

**SE:** "That's a difficult question. I guess winning the title so close to home is the best thing about winning this year. I have won many titles, all a long way from home, so it was nice to claim the title near my home at the Lierop GP. I won both motos, the weather was great and there were so many of my Belgian fans there. It was really special for me."

**dbr:** What is the worst thing about winning the world title this season?

**SE:** "It might sound a little strange but my popularity in Belgium. It is really high at the moment which is a good thing but sometimes it is difficult to keep smiling all the time. People don't give me one minute of rest some times. I had a few races this season that were really difficult because of that."

**dbr:** What has been your biggest crash this season?

**SE:** "The most spectacular crash was in Spain. I made a mistake in the whoops and was hanging over the handlebars with my legs up in the air. It was also a pretty big impact when I crashed because I hurt my ribs when I hit the ground."

**dbr:** What could the FIM or Youthstream have done to make the series better?

**SE:** "I don't like to give too many comments because of my penalty. I can't say anything about the FIM or Youthstream. There are many

many things – too many to say – but I won't comment on them."

**dbr:** What was your favourite circuit this year?

**SE:** "I had the most fun at Matchams. It was a cool track because of the big whoops, the jumps and the sand. I really enjoyed it there."

**dbr:** What was the worst circuit this season?

**SE:** "Namur was so difficult for me this year. Normally it is one of my favourite tracks but this year with the rain it was really difficult, especially one of the steep downhills. It was really tough."

**dbr:** What country did you enjoy visiting the most this season?

**SE:** "I think Japan was a great success. Winning the Japanese GP in front of the people from Yamaha was cool. Also, the event helped to raise the profile of the world championship in Japan."

**dbr:** What was your hardest race this season?

**SE:** "I think the second moto in France when I crashed. I had bent handlebars and my bike was all twisted which made coming back hard."

"Also, the first moto in Italy where I rode really unrelaxed. I was having a difficult time to finish fourth or fifth, I just couldn't get into my rhythm."

**dbr:** What was your best start this season?

**SE:** "The second moto in Lierop – I got a big-time holeshot for the first and only time this year."

**dbr:** What do you consider to be your best performance this season?

**SE:** "I had a few – Matchams Park, Lierop, Ireland. You know those races where I won the double. Germany was also nice but I didn't get the satisfaction there that I did from the other races."

**dbr:** What was your most disappointing result?

**SE:** "South Africa where I crashed on the last lap of the race and lost the GP victory to Coppins."

**dbr:** What was your best pass this season?

**SE:** "The one I can remember at this moment was the pass I made on Townley in Ireland. Before the whoop section I went from the outside of the turn to the inside and had passed him before we got to the whoops. I saw that was one of the places to pass him. I had a better line but at the time I went to pass him he made a little mistake, which made the pass easier for me. He was a little surprised when I pulled alongside him."

**dbr:** What do you think was your best qualifying performance?



*The des Nations was a rare disappointment in a triumphant '05 season*



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Stefan enjoys a  
supemoto outing  
at Mettet

**SE:** "Pole position in South Africa. I got it on the last lap. Everything just went great. I had Ireland and Lierop where I was on pole right up until the last few minutes but didn't get it. Pichon is the king of pole positions because he can put one really fast lap together – I don't know how he does it."

**dbr:** What was the coolest jump this year?

**SE:** "A really cool and difficult jump was the one in Japan where you could jump into the whoops and make a triple. You had to take the outside line and carry lots of speed. I think that I only did it once or twice in the race though. You couldn't see the landing because the berm before the first tabletop jump was lower than the landing. When I did it perfectly it was awesome. I think that Townley did it first."

**dbr:** What was the coolest thing a fan said to you this season?

**SE:** "One thing fans have said that is special to me is 'thanks for the great memories you have given us'. Also, this season a blind man came to me at a Belgian championship race and he said that he had been a fan of me for more than 10 years. He listened to the TV and had planned to come and see me for some time. He told me that he hadn't slept the night before

because he was so nervous. That was a really nice moment for me."

**dbr:** What did you spend your championship bonus on?

**SE:** "I haven't bought anything special yet. There are a few things that I would still like to have but my priority at this moment is to build a farm in Belgium. I have the land and the plans ready, I just need the permissions. This is my dream – to build a house and a big workshop for all of my toys. I want a museum with a bar and a pool and a cinema room. That's where I want to put a lot of my bonus."

**dbr:** Which rider impressed you the most this season?

**SE:** "I think Tyla rode well. I think he would have had a big chance of winning the world title if he hadn't got injured. He has a great style and will get faster."

**dbr:** What rider disappointed you this season?

**SE:** "Usually my expectations are pretty good and they were this season. Maybe I expected more from Ramon. I expected Josh to be fast but he had some injury problems. I expected Pichon to be fast but I didn't expect him to fall away like he did."

**dbr:** What areas of your riding will you work on over the winter?

**SE:** "It is important for me to be more aggressive during the first few laps of the race. That is Pichon's strong point – he can really explode for 10 minutes. I am more like a diesel because I need 10 minutes to get going and then I am okay."

**dbr:** Did your mechanic do anything to annoy you this season?

**SE:** "No. Not one thing. He is the best mechanic I have ever had. He is so determined. He is really quiet and just gets on with preparing my bike. He knows what he needs to do to make me happy."

**dbr:** What is the most stupid thing you did during a race?

**SE:** "Probably that I waved to the crowd in South Africa. People think that was the reason why I crashed but the mistake was that I cased the jump. Even if I hadn't waved to the crowd I still would have crashed because I came up short. I was too relaxed, waved and fell."

**dbr:** What is your favourite racing memory from '05?

**SE:** "I got a lot of satisfaction from the first race in Namur. There was more or less nowhere to pass on the track and I was the only rider to find one place where you could pass. I knew from the first rider that I passed there that I would be able to pass everyone and win the race. That was such a fantastic feeling figuring that out. That is the first time in my whole career that I got that feeling inside. There have been other great moments but not as good as that one. To win titles is cool and hard but in Namur I felt something extra."

**dbr:** What rider will make things really hard for you next year?

**SE:** "Well, Tortelli is coming back next year and he made a good impression at the des Nations. I always try to consider my rivals as being strong. I expect more from Pichon. Josh has some new experience and the same good bike so he will be strong and Ramon is a great rider but I'm not sure if they will race for the title."

**dbr:** The coolest thing a sponsor did for you this season?

**SE:** "What Acerbis did by putting all the flags inside the number 72 on my race shirt was cool. They also made a small T-shirt for my son with the number one on it."



"I expected Pichon to be strong but I didn't expect him to fall away like he did"



Stefan shares a joke  
with RC at Ernee









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# BLUE TWO!

**With the MX1 and MX2 crowns in the bag thanks to Stefan Everts and Antonio Cairoli, Yamaha have been the dominant force in world championship motocross in '05. We sent Jonty Edmunds to Italy to learn more about the two title-winning machines and find out first hand what it's like to ride them for our UK exclusive test**

Words and static photos by Jonty Edmunds Action photos by Redeye

**BY ANYONE'S** standards, 2005 has been a hugely successful season for Yamaha on the world championship motocross stage. Retaining the MX1 title thanks to the continued supremacy of Belgian legend Stefan Everts and the claiming of their first ever MX2 crown by Italian teenager Antonio Cairoli gave Yamaha the much coveted MXGP 'double'. And topping the manufacturer's title chase was the icing on their championship-winning cake.

But while Yamaha's MX1 and MX2 campaigns both produced championship victories, the ease with which the Japanese manufacturer claimed their two titles differed hugely. In MX2 Yamaha dominated during '05 with numerous riders and teams topping the podium during the 17-round series. In MX1 victory was a little harder to come by as Yamaha battled it out with Honda and KTM.

Many reasons can be given as to why

Yamaha dominated the MX2 championship this season. Firstly, they stepped up the development of what had already been a competitive bike during '04 and hired a mixture of seasoned GP campaigners and title-hungry youngsters. Seeing KTM – their main rival – suffer with injured riders also helped their cause.

In MX1 Stefan Everts' experience and speed, coupled with the focused efforts of the hugely successful Rinaldi team, ensured that Yamaha retained the number one plate. Yamaha certainly didn't have things all their own way in MX1 but the Everts/Rinaldi/Yamaha combination again proved to be unbeatable over a full season.

Many similarities can be drawn between the two world championship winning Yamahas of Everts and Cairoli above and beyond the fact that they are both reworked production-based machines. Both are prepared in Italy (admittedly by different tuning stables) which means that

both run numerous Italian-made aftermarket parts – Arrow, Leo Vince, Tommi, Regina, Acerbis, UFO, Newfren, Brembo, Tecnozel and Vertex to name but a few.

Both machines also have an emphasis on affordability, simplicity and attention to detail with both bikes running standard frames, swingarms and linkages. While Everts and Cairoli differ hugely in their riding styles, size and experience, both have seen their teams produce machinery to suit their specific needs.

For the Rinaldi team that meant focusing their attention on improving the engine's horsepower and torque to suit Everts' smooth riding style. For the De Carli team it meant hours and hours of testing and meticulous attention to detail to ensure Cairoli's bike produced the explosive power required to match both that of its competitors as well as his own aggressive style.

Although both bikes run standard frames





both teams did away with holding oil inside the chassis – making the bikes lighter by only holding oil in the engines. The only other chassis modifications made were the addition of brackets to hold sump guards in place. When it comes to the swingarms used there is a difference between the two bikes. Everts' machine runs a longer – but production-based – unit while Cairoli's bike, at less cost, simply runs the rear wheel as far back as is possible at all times. Extending the wheelbase slightly gives both bikes increased stability while both retain a 100 per cent standard linkage system.

Unsurprisingly, both bikes' engine modifications are centred around the cylinderheads. Cairoli's bike retains standard valves and valve springs and only on occasions uses De Carli non-standard cams. The work carried out on the cylinderhead is done by De Carli himself with the sole objective being to

produce more top-end power. Retaining a standard but modified crank, a Vertex piston is also used in Cairoli's bike.

Everts' bike uses several non-standard YRRD (Yamaha Rinaldi Racing Development) parts. While cylinderhead work is carried out to give a different type of power to that of the production bike, with the 450 producing plenty of power as standard the focus of the Rinaldi team was to improve low and mid-range power and not gain more top-end power like on Cairoli's Yamaha. A YRRD piston, forged con rod and YRRD titanium exhaust and inlet valves are used as well as in-house tuning being carried out on the cylinderhead. Different cams and a modified crank are also used to ensure smooth but strong bottom-to-mid power is produced. Both teams have the crankcases coated to make them externally tougher as well as making internal improvements to

aid the oil flow within them.

An area where the two bikes differ is their gearboxes. Cairoli's 250 retains the standard internal gearing while Everts' machine runs a longer second and third gear to give a longer, smoother spread of power.

One part both bikes have in common is non-standard ignitions. Both bikes feature programmable CDI units that YRRD and De Carli programme independently. With the CDI fitted to Cairoli's bike designed to give a stronger, across the board, spread of power as well as allowing the bike to rev higher, on Everts' race bike the CDI is programmed to do much the same thing. Although the ignition curves can be changed at any time during the season, both teams carried out extensive pre-season testing to determine the best set-up and have run with these all year. Only in the sand is Cairoli's bike set-up – cam and



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*Loads of top-end and not much else make Cairoli's bike a challenging ride...*

ignition – changed noticeably. Both bikes retain standard carburettors which are jetted carefully from track to track with Cairoli's carb featuring a modified venturi.

Both bikes also run Italian-made titanium exhaust systems – Arrow supply the Rinaldi team and Leo Vince the De Carli squad. Both manufacturers' systems allow the two bikes to breathe a little better than standard and weigh a little less while still keeping both bikes below the permitted noise level for GP races.

The suspension fitted to the two bikes is also very different with Everts using factory Kayaba parts and Cairoli's bike being fitted with Italian-made Solva units. This is the third year that Everts has used the Japanese Kayaba 50mm USD forks and Cairoli's machine is also fitted with fully adjustable 50mm units. Both shocks are very different to standard despite being the same length and attaching to standard linkages. Both riders and teams work closely with their suspension suppliers to ensure that in all conditions their bikes handle at their very best.

As well as different suspension being fitted to both bikes the two machines also feature a different triple clamp offset. Cairoli prefers to run with the same set-up as a standard bike

while Everts uses two settings – one of 22.5mm and one of 25mm when racing in sand which effectively lengthens the bike. Both bikes feature billet machined triple clamps that allow handlebar clamp adjustment.

Brakes are another area where the two bikes differ with Everts' 450 fitted with a Brembo front brake master cylinder and radial caliper which bolts onto the lower left fork leg from the rear, rather than from the side as on a standard bike. Everts' rear brake system is a mixture of a Brembo master cylinder and a Yamaha caliper which is fitted with a YRRD billet brake pedal.

Antonio's bike uses a standard Yamaha front brake master cylinder and caliper which is used in conjunction with an oversized 270mm Newfren disk. The rear set-up is, apart from a Newfren disk and pads, completely standard other than the addition of the same factory style pedal that Stefan uses. Both use a 270mm front and 245mm rear disc set-up.

While Everts' bike uses more non-standard internal engine parts it retains the standard airbox and subframe which Cairoli's bike doesn't. Replacing the standard aluminium subframe and plastic airbox on the Italian's bike is a one-piece carbon fibre unit that is bigger



*...while Everts' 450F is even easier to put in fast laps on than a stocker*

and lighter than standard, allowing a larger volume of air to be held within it.

One thing that Cairoli's bike doesn't have that Everts' does is a Brembo hydraulic clutch. Retaining the cable-operated system, a Domino clutch perch and lever are fitted to the MX2 title-winning bike while Everts' bike gets the very special Brembo unit.

The internals of the two bikes' clutches also differ as much as the external systems that activate them. Inside Everts' bike a standard Yamaha clutch is used while a Hinson unit is fitted to Cairoli's bike.

The remaining changes to both bikes are largely the fitting of numerous carbon fibre parts such as chain guards and engine mounting brackets to save weight as well as sump, water pump and rear brake master cylinder guards for protection.

Both bikes are littered with titanium and aluminium fasteners and use larger than standard ti footpegs and non-standard fuel tanks. Everts' bike is fitted with an aluminium unit while Cairoli's has a carbon fibre tank. Both bikes use magnesium clutch and ignition covers and both bikes feature largely standard wheels.



THE GREAT OUTDOORS: THE CONSTANT WAR



## The Great Outdoors — The Constant War

The latest and greatest version of The Great Outdoors — The Constant War — takes viewers and drops them right into the boots of the world's best motocross pilots. Done in classic "fly on the wall" sports journalism style, The Great Outdoors goes far deeper and far more inside than any motocross film that has come before.

Unprecedented in scope, throughout the entire summer, candid moments are caught by the film crew, uncovering the real life truth and meaning of 2005 AMA National Championship Series. Beginning with round one in Sacramento, California, the producers of TGO select an individual rider, and his mechanic, attach microphones to them, then let the film roll. What results are compelling, intimate storylines portraying the human drama that is so much a part of professional motocross. Going places the ordinary fan cannot, TGO ventures far beyond the snow fence surrounding the racetracks of the AMA series to capture the good, the bad — the hope and the glory — of racing.

Along the way on the 12 stop tour, James Stewart sits down for an exclusive interview, not holding back about the emotional roller coaster ride that was his rookie season in the 250 division. Ivan Tedesco talks of exceeding his expectations to rise to the top of the 125 class. The iconic Doug Henry, once again, shows up before his legion of fans at Southwick, his heart on his jersey sleeve. Team KTM is shadowed at the Glen Helen season finale, which ultimately turned to be one of the most dramatic title showdowns in the 30-year history of U.S. motocross. And of course there is all the amazing high-speed and slow-motion footage that has made TGO the most popular serial DVD series of all-time. The talent and athleticism portrayed by Ricky Carmichael, Kevin Windham, Chad Reed, Grant Langston, Mike Alessi, Davi Millsaps, David Willemin, as well as a cast of thousands, in the film are equally astonishing and inspiring.

But perhaps the most engaging segment of the TGO — The Constant War is that which features retiring veteran John Dowd. The crew follows the 39 year-old's farewell season where he says one last goodbye to his fans, friends and the sport that he loves. TGO — The Constant War is look behind the curtain of the relentless, never ending battle motocross racers must face against the elements, against each other — and against themselves.

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## Top-end terror!

CAIROLI'S HIGH-REVVING HONEY  
LIKES IT HARD AND FAST

*It didn't take long once out on the track to realise that the engine modifications made to Cairoli's bike improve top-end performance significantly over a standard YZ250F but at the cost of bottom-end performance.*

*With the engine modifications having given the bike some serious get up and go when revved hard, on the occasions I let the revs drop expecting the motor to be strong enough to pull itself back up the rev range it didn't.*

*Without using the clutch like on a 125 or down-shifting to ensure revs stayed high the bike would hesitate to accelerate making it feel badly jettied. The mild bottom and mid-range drive was surprising and made it noticeably harder to ride than a standard YZ250F. Very much a bike that needs to be raced hard, the fact that the motor's strength and rideability had been replaced with high-revving top-end power made it feel much more like a very strong 125 than a 250cc four-stroke.*

*With the strong, smooth and tractable power curve of a 250cc four-stroke – the very thing*



factory Yamaha test



Cairoli's billet-machined triple clamp offset is the same as standard

*tractable drive that a 250F normally gives, Cairoli's bike would hit high into the rev range which would result in stoker-style wheelspin. On the freshly graded start straight the bike cut through the loamy soil and drove forward rapidly. Producing this kind of power, my guess is that the bike would be a lot easier to ride in the mud than a standard 250cc four-stroke. The riding position was, for the most part, very similar to a standard Yamaha and both comfortable and easy to settle into. The one thing that wasn't easy to get on with was the very firm and sharp front brake and high levers.*

*The suspension was very plush in the initial part of both the fork's and shock's stroke and despite Antonio being a very small and light rider the Solva suspension gave a very reassuring feel everywhere around the track. Soaking up the smaller bumps on entry to corners, the bike also easily absorbed the few unintentional flat landings I made. Not wanting to push the suspension to its limits myself, the few times I did over-jump any of the several tabletops littered around the track it was easy to see that if Cairoli wanted to purposely land flat off a jump then he could do so with little ill-effect.*

*that makes Yamaha's YZ250F such an easy bike to ride – replaced with on/off style power the fact that Antonio's bike had little bottom-end was at times difficult to adjust to. Needing to rev the motor to get the best from it, I found myself riding it like a 125 – revving the bike heavily in each gear before shifting up. Even around mid-speed corners the bike needed to be clutched a little to get the power back up the rev range. While the power would return quickly whenever the throttle was closed briefly after being revved hard, the bike was reluctant to pull from bottom-to-middle-to-top without the help of the clutch.*

*When revved to within an inch of its life Cairoli's De Carli-tuned machine performed at its very best. Building revs extremely quickly the bike could be held in second and third gear much, much longer than a standard YZ250F as the bike revved higher and longer without the power dropping off. But riding the bike hard required constant rider input, which ultimately also required GP level fitness.*

*One area where the bike's two-stroke characteristics were clearly an advantage was when performing starts. Instead of the*



A one-piece carbon fibre unit replaces the standard alu subframe and plastic airbox



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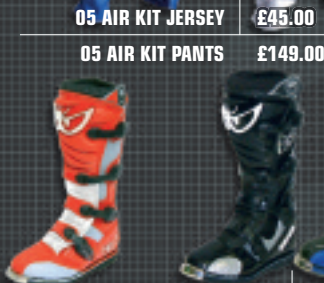


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## Mid-range master!

SMOOTH AND USER-FRIENDLY, EVERTS' FACTORY FOUR-FIDDY STILL PACKS A KO PUNCH

Putting out a claimed 60bhp, Everts' YZ450FM is a much easier bike to ride than its maximum power output suggests. In fact, Everts' bike is easier to ride than a standard YZ450F. Although the bike does produce an enormous amount of power, the way in which it builds its power and then puts it to the ground is incredibly deceptive and frighteningly smooth.

With its long second and third gears the need to change gear after starting is all but removed on Stefan's bike as third gear can be used at almost all times. The motor builds progressive power with a very strong mid-range and this – matched to its super strength which allows revs to be dropped and raised easily with no abruptness – results in the bike being incredibly easy to ride. Almost like an exceedingly powerful twist-and-go scooter.

While the strength of the motor can be felt when accelerating hard up hills, in corners it is deceptively mellow and has a very different feel to that of a standard YZ450F. By turning the throttle the slightest amount the bike drives – controllably but forcefully – around any turn where speed can be carried. In tight stop-and-go corners the bike's manoeuvrability shines as it can be made to stop, turn and set-off incredibly easily.

Complimenting the motor's easy to use characteristics is the supple and forgiving Kayaba suspension. Seemingly too soft for GP level motocross when sitting on the bike, the initial action of both the forks and shock is incredibly plush before getting almost unnoticeably firmer.

Out on the track the softness of the suspension doesn't feel quite as dramatic as it does when pushing up and down on the bars when stationary and the bike feels extremely well planted to the track, especially around flat mid-speed turns. But it is when crossing rougher terrain that the suspension is at its most impressive. Soaking up braking bumps brilliantly, the bike remains incredibly stable and holds its line no matter how choppy the entry to a corner is. Be it a flat or rutted corner the bike turns perfectly with the front wheel remaining firmly fixed to the ground at all times.

Although the bike is extremely easy to ride as the wide spread of power requires little more than an occasional dip of the clutch when exiting tighter corners, for very different reasons to Cairoli's bike Stefan's bike also requires a high level of fitness to get the best from it. Despite having an almost electric power delivery and fantastically forgiving suspension, because it is so easy to feel confident on I found myself pushing harder which resulted in fatigue setting in pretty quickly.

But while the motor is extremely rideable, the fact that Stefan has his levers so high makes his bike a little difficult to feel comfortable on. While the bend and positioning of the handlebars is nothing out of the ordinary, the fact that he runs both his front brake and clutch lever directly in line with his bars requires a contorted bend of both wrists or dropped elbows. Either way, they're not easy to adjust to.



Everts has a choice of two triple clamp offsets depending on track conditions



Everts' radial caliper bolts onto the lower left fork leg from the rear







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## judge jonty

IN CONCLUSION...

Riding Yamaha's two world title-winning bikes back-to-back gave an interesting insight into the way in which the two different Italian tuners have modified each motor's power characteristics. Cairoli's bike – although harder to ride than a standard YZ250F – has much, much faster top-end performance but at the expense of bottom-end rideability. Stefan's bike on the other hand is easier than a standard bike to ride and has an abundance of smooth, strong power. While Cairoli's bike doesn't perform at its best unless it is making a lot of noise, Everts' bike is all about mid-range power.

Another thing that was interesting was the way in which the two riders have the balance of their suspension set-up differently. While the forks and shock on Stefan's bike seemed to work in complete harmony, Cairoli's bike was noticeably softer on the rear. This didn't have any detrimental effect on the way the bike handled, it simply squatted noticeably more as it drove out of corners. While they are two very different bikes to ride, it's easy to see why Yamaha – thanks to Everts and Cairoli – managed to do the double in '05.



Yoo-hoo! Over here Gary!



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*Leuret was a big hit at Bercy last year – despite an infamous clash with Mike Alessi*



# LOST AND FOUND

**After a promising start to his career, cash-strapped Pascal Leuret looked all washed up. But now the fast Frenchman – this season's leading MX1 privateer – has a deal with Multitek Honda and is aiming to make up for lost time**

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

WITH A wealth of teenage talent which makes them the envy of the world, France is the last place you'd expect to find a 24-year-old privateer making it second time around. But that is what Pascal Leuret has done this year, finishing the MX1 world series as the first truly genuine privateer in eighth to clinch a deal with Trevor Avery's Multitek team for 2006!

Amazingly, Pascal didn't even qualify for a GP until 2003 and he nearly had to quit the world series mid-term for lack of cash – yet this is the boy who, as a teenager, kicked the ass of Stevie Boniface in the 125cc race which supported the world championship SX in front of 50,000 people at the Stade de France.



**Pascal discusses bike set-up with Multitek's Steve Payne**



*The Frenchman was amazed by the power of the Multitek machine at Desertmartin*





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"Yes, that was my second year on a 125 and I had finished third in the French Junior championship and fifth in the French SX. That was when my career started to take off and then in 1999 I won the French Junior title and finished fifth in the European championship. But then I lost my way.

"I had been in the French federation training school and that brought me on but when I was alone I had no-one to point me in the right direction. My dad works six days a week as a car mechanic so I could only go riding Sundays. I was a loser, I didn't have a strong mind, my motivation disappeared and I lost my way."

Pascal had never had anything handed to him on a plate. "I got interested in motocross when I was seven. My father was a road racing fan and didn't like motocross at first but I kept on at him and he eventually bought me a Pee Wee. And I kept getting better."

From the low point of 2000/01 it was go for it or quit – and the artisan Pascal started to graft. "I knew I had to work harder if I wanted to start getting results again. I only rode supercross in 2002 – I worked at it and I won the French championship in 125. That was the impetus for me to go to the US at the start of 2003 and that is where I got to know Mickael Pichon.

"I was in the US to race the first six SX races, we spoke at Anaheim III and when I got back to France he called me and asked if I wanted to move to Le Mans and go riding and training together. Mickael gives me a lot of good

advice and has shown me so many options in bike set-up and also shown me another side of life. He's my teacher and I moved from my native Lyon and have lived near Le Mans for the last two years.

"Mickael showed me how to train properly – both physically and mentally – and I returned to motocross in 2003. I worked hard and the results have come. In the GPs that year I got 19th in the series, even though I missed the first three races. I got a seventh in Austria and several top 10s.

"But I didn't progress in 2004. I was on KTM which was the best two-stroke but it was becoming more and more difficult against all the four-strokes. KTM France had promised me I would get a semi-factory bike but I got a standard SSX, nothing more.

"That was what persuaded me to go to MX1. Without a factory bike in MX2 you have no chance – in MX1 the rider counts for more because nobody can ride those bikes full. Just with a standard bike you can get results if you are good enough."

And that's a fact that Pascal has proved all season, the highlights being fifths in Portugal, France and South Africa – and third places in Italy and at Nismes! And he has achieved it against all the odds...

"Paolo Martin had told me maybe I could ride for him in MX2 last autumn but in the end he had nothing for me and my deal with Honda France was for the French championship only. I had a good spares budget but I even had to buy

the bike – at a reduced price but I didn't get it for free.

"I called many teams for a place but there was nothing. The only solution I had left if I wanted to ride the GPs was to go it alone with the bike in the back of my camper. My girlfriend's brother came with me as helper.

"I felt confident that I had the speed to finish between fifth and 10th but it was a big surprise to me to get a podium in Italy and then again at Nismes. But now I have done it I know it is possible and I want many more next year.

"In the beginning I could only plan the first three GPs but I was top 15 and decided to continue. After that every week got better and before I knew it I was battling for top 10."

Still, the season was not secure. "I had bonus money from Shot but it was tough. After five or six GPs I didn't have any money left but they told this on Motors – the French TV channel that shows the motocross GPs – and that I couldn't go to Sweden because I couldn't afford it. A guy from Nice who follows motocross and rides himself as an amateur called me up and gave me 1000 Euros to get me to Sweden. I never even met him before. We eventually met up for the first time at the Nations. It's incredible, such a great guy!

"Shot, Shark, Boomer Racing, Gotcha, they all increased their help a bit more as well and that got me to the rest of the GPs."

In the end a big crash in the Dutch sand at Lierop left Pascal still a bit disorientated at Desertmartin where, in the absence of







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**Pascal leads Josh Coppins (#5) and chases after mentor Mickael Pichon (#2)**



## bercy killing!

WHEN PASCAL MET MIKEY

*Until this season Pascal was probably best-known for his sterling show at Bercy last November when he only lost second place over the weekend after Mike Alessi ran them both off the track at the last turn.*

*"I didn't make a mistake at the last turn in Bercy. By the third night the track was hardpack and there was no way to take the inside line, you couldn't turn and have the drive for the jump. It was impossible to pass correctly on that line but I guess he would have taken me out there as well if I had taken it.*

*"I am still convinced that the outside line was my only solution. There was a two-foot berm in the middle of the turn so it was impossible to make a normal block pass. He hit it and just took off – if he hadn't hit me he'd have gone straight off the track. It's over, I'm not going to cry over it – but it was a stupid move by him."*

*And it made Pascal the first member in the adult ranks of the 'Alessi Fan Club' – expanded since to incorporate Langston, Tedesco, Walker and Philippaerts to name just four!*

Paul Cooper, he had been offered the use of the Multitek Honda for the weekend as a try-out.

On paper the result was not what was hoped for as Pascal was nipped for seventh at the death by Jonathan Barragan but, before the effects of Lierop caused him to fall, he'd ridden his fellow privateers into the ground.

"I was amazed by the power of the Multitek bike. It is so powerful but so smooth too and the bike is very light and the factory suspension was amazing.

"You know, I never rode the bike until I got there. Steve Payne adjusted the steering and the suspension because I am much lighter than Paul Cooper and the bike felt right from the word go. It was amazing because Steve didn't know me but he had the feel for what would be right for me and I am really enthusiastic about working with him next year. He's a good guy and meticulous in his preparation of the bike."

The Desertmartin weekend was a dry run for all parties to see if they could work together



and by Saturday evening there were nothing but positive vibes all round and the deal was sealed with a handshake.

"I had an offer from Steve Dixon too but I think Multitek is the best choice for me. I can stay on Honda and I feel comfortable with Trevor, Steve and Paul and they are doing it out of passion, not as a business.

"I really believe that I can ride with the factory guys on this bike. I don't think I can be champion but I can finish top five and that must be the limit for a non-factory guy.

"It is not part of my contract to ride the British championship but I think I will ride some rounds as a wild card entry. Trevor has given me the choice and perhaps there will be a round which will be good preparation for the next GP or perhaps we need to try something new on the bike and then I will come over. Maybe Paul will also ride in Britain. I'm not sure. Both Trevor and Steve told me Paul is a very good test rider with a good feeling for the bike

so that will be a big help to me.

"I may also ride a few rounds of the French championship if it's a good track and I need to ride. We will play it by ear, training and racing in Britain and France or training in Belgium, dependant on what is best. I am also free to ride any SX I want – Bercy, Barcelona, Belfast – and I can keep my clothing deal."

The contract is for two years and, after that, who knows? America? MX2? "Maybe. I had several proposals to go race in the States next year but I prefer to stay in Europe for at least two years. The US is very difficult – if you don't win, you are soon out. And I think I could probably get even better results if I had a good 250 four-stroke.

"Mickael and me ride 250s during the week in training and I have good speed. He is still faster than me but the difference is two seconds less. But first I have a two-year contract with Multitek to race MX1 and I want to succeed for both myself and the team!"





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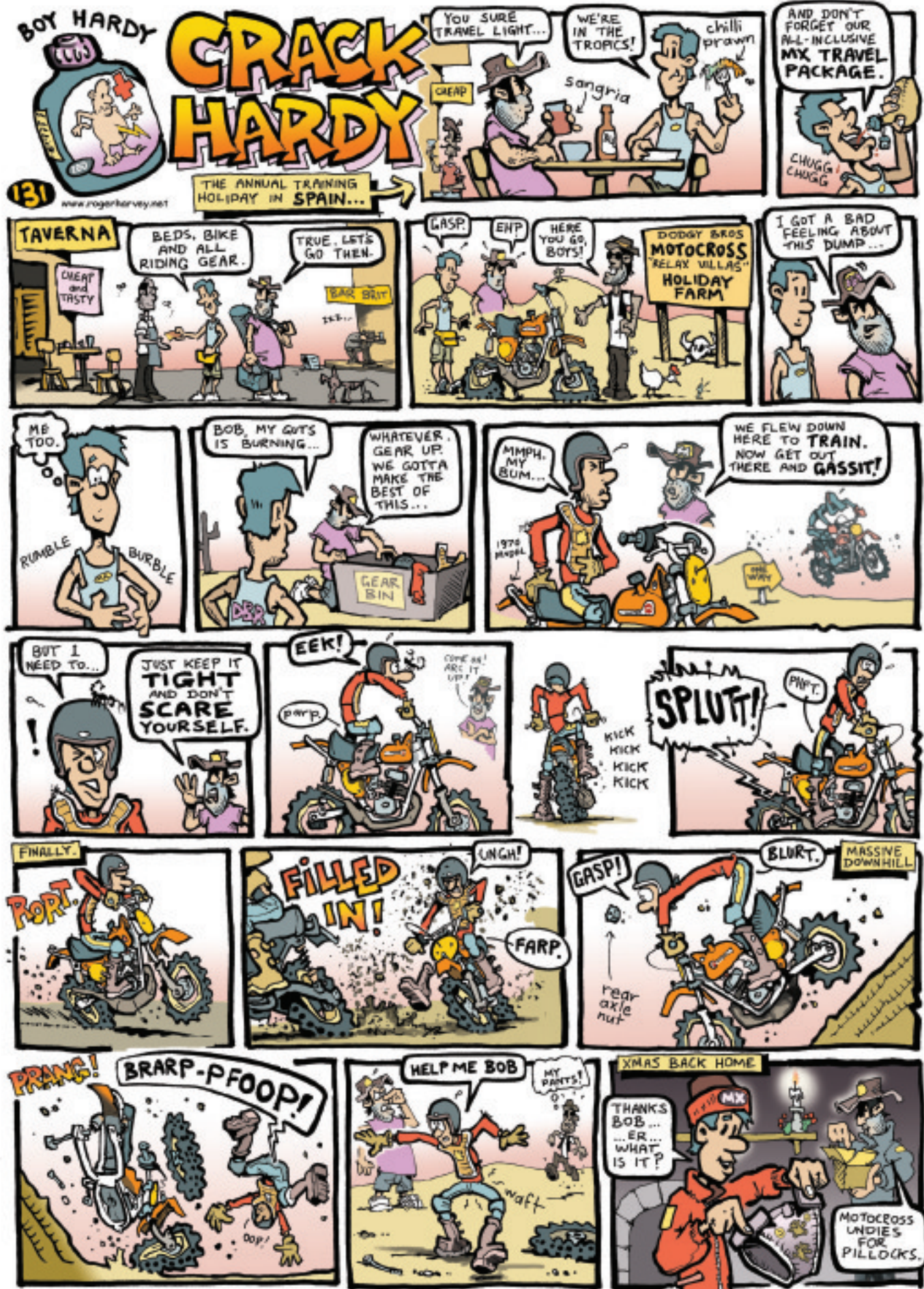
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There's a well-worn saying that some riders have 'paid their dues' but in the case of US Open of SX Lites winner Brett Metcalfe it's a fact, not a cliché

# PAID UP!

BRETT METCALFE IS JUST ABOUT THE MOST LIKEABLE GUY IN THE AMA PITS. AND WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE? HE'S NICE, MAKES TIME FOR THE FANS, LOVES WHAT HE DOES AND WORKS VERY HARD AT IT. UNFORTUNATELY FOR HIM, AFTER PARTING WAYS WITH RED BULL KTM BEFORE THE 2005 SEASON HE WAS LEFT ON BOARD A YZ125 TWO-STROKE AGAINST A FIELD OF FOUR-STROKES FOR MUCH OF THE YEAR. INDOORS HE MADE DO – EVEN ACHIEVING A COUPLE OF COME-FROM-BEHIND TOP FIVE FINISHES ON THE WEST. OUTDOORS, HOWEVER, WAS ANOTHER STORY... AT UNADILLA YAMAHA OF TROY GAVE BRETT A YZ250F FOR THE FIRST TIME. THE RESULT WAS A CRASH IN EACH MOTO AND HE WAS UNABLE TO START THE BIKE AFTER ONE OF THOSE CRASHES. HOWEVER, NOW THAT HE'S ADJUSTED TO THE YZ250F – AND NOW THAT HE'S ON THE ALL-NEW, ALUMINIUM-FRAMED 2006 MODEL – IT TOOK HIM EXACTLY ONE RACE TO GET HIS FIRST AMERICAN WIN AT THE US OPEN OF SUPERCROSS. LET'S START AT THE BEGINNING...

dbr: How did you get to America?

BM: "I went to Europe for a year in 2002 but it actually all kind of kicked off in 2000. KTM arranged for me to race in Paris at the Bercy Supercross and I did really good. The last night I actually won a race and I finished on the podium all three races and that was kind of enough. So they wanted me to stay one more year in Australia in 2001 and I won the championship and then KTM took me to Europe in 2002.

"While I was there I did some supercrosses and before their season even started they wanted me to come to America. I always wanted to come to America because of the supercross series. I think Europe was a good stepping stone."

dbr: Did Europe teach you anything about living away from home?

BM: "Pretty much. There's a learning curve to living and surviving in Europe coming from another country. If you can do that, you can live anywhere. The racing took a lot of learning, too. Unfortunately, I didn't get to finish the year off. I only finished half of the year before I had a shoulder injury."

Words and photos by STEVE COX

dbr: Your brother races motocross back home in Australia, right?

BM: "Yeah, he races in Australia. My dad used to do enduro racing – he didn't get into motocross but he did enduros. He loved to ride. His dad had a bike that he rode, too, so it's a generational thing. My brother started riding at five and started racing and then when I was four I had my first bike. Since then it was from Pee Wees to the 125s racing with each other."

dbr: Unfortunately, once you got here you were plagued by injuries and one gnarly sickness that almost cost you your leg, right?

BM: "In '03, my first year in America, it went really good, actually. Back then most people were on two-strokes so it was an even playing field and KTM was one of the strongest so it was kind of cool. Halfway through the outdoors I crashed pretty bad and tore my ACL and had an operation for that and got a staph [caused by the staphylococcal bacteria] infection.

"That knocked me around a lot and even still today it knocks me around quite a bit. I'm over it but I still feel like when I get sick, I get sick for a



## steve cox



**S**teve Cox is an American moto-journo who follows the entire AMA SX/MX tour. A staffer at famed US weekly Cycle News for over four years before striking out on his own to do the freelance thing, Steve's an ex-pro motocross racer so he can ride as well as write. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides top-level insight and features fresh from the Stateside scene...





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## WHEN BRETT FINALLY GOT HIS PAWS ON A FOUR-BANGER HE STRUGGLED TO RESTART IT AFTER CRASHING

lot longer than everyone else does. It really messes your immune system up. My knees are fine but I went through three operations on my knee and almost had my leg amputated. But I got over it and the last two years have been good. I've just got to keep plugging away and I've got a great bike so it should be good. It feels like '03 now when everyone was on two-strokes because now I'm on a four-stroke with everyone else."

**dbr:** You have a very active style on your bike. It's fun to watch and it looks like it translates into speed after your US Open win. It looks sometimes like some of your four-stroke competition have a lazy style in comparison.

**BM:** "I definitely tried to carry the energy and creativity I had on the two-stroke onto the four-stroke but at the same time, when you watch Stewart or Byrne or Ricky,

they all have a lot of energy on the bike. I think when you ride a four-stroke after a while – the guys who have been on them for three or four years – you do get a little lazy. You can almost afford to get a little lazy on a four-stroke but on a two-stroke you can't.

"I've tried to maintain that as much as I can and still ride the four-stroke the way it should be ridden. It took me a while to get it down because I think in the beginning I was too radical on it but it's coming along good."

**dbr:** How will you keep from getting lazy?

**BM:** "I don't know! I've got video of when I first started riding it before the Open so maybe in a couple years time if I start getting lazy I'll watch that and kick myself in the ass."

**dbr:** There's a term that's a bit over-used which is that people have paid their dues. It should be reserved for guys like yourself. How did it feel to get your first win? The word satisfying springs to mind...

**BM:** "It was a big deal for me. Surprisingly enough, a lot of people actually realised that I've worked so hard for so long and everyone was like 'congratulations – it's good to see someone put in the hard work and effort and get the reward like that'.

"That felt great to have a lot of people in the pits calling



me up and saying the same as what I feel. That kind of feels just as good getting the recognition from people as winning the race. I mean, I don't ask for it and for them to come up and say that to me, it was pretty awesome. It's a great boost going into next year for me."

**dbr:** How did you stay motivated for this long on a two-stroke against four-strokes?

**BM:** "I don't really know. I kind of had some good people around me, I guess. It was, at times, difficult to even want to go racing. It was frustrating. Luckily, my dad was here and I have a good girlfriend and the team is good so it gave me a little extra to keep putting in what you're supposed to be putting in. That's why I never gave up. I don't think there's reason to give up. I would always try my hardest. If 15th is the best I could do then that's all I've got." ♦



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## BRETT'S CARRYING HIS TWO-STROKE WORK ETHIC ACROSS TO THE THUMPER



dbr: But if 15th's the best you could do and you get 17th you'd be pissed...

BM: "Exactly. I was sometimes a little upset because I thought I could ride better but the harder I tried, sometimes the worse off I was. It was a vicious cycle, I think, the whole two-stroke deal. It put a pretty big downer on my confidence and my self-belief started to dwindle. Once I got on the four-stroke I realised that when I could get that down I would do good. Now it feels like I ride the four-stroke without thinking about it being a four-stroke. I'm out there racing to win again."

dbr: So were you encouraged by lap times at the test track coming into the US Open?

BM: "My lap times got faster but the overall confidence in myself was better. The first month the whole time I was thinking 'I've got to get on the four-stroke'. And I finally got on one and I didn't ride very good and that was kind of playing on my mind."

"I rode a lot and that's what it took to finally get the hang of it and ride it properly. The last couple Nationals I was finally in the hunt for top 10 which felt good and I was happy to pull it off. I got to start off with a new bike now which is a lot better and it's a sign of good things to come."

dbr: Do you think you're a better supercross rider or outdoor rider?

BM: "Neither. I think I'm pretty even on both. I think my outdoors is pretty good and I love to ride supercross. Next year it'll be good."

dbr: Which coast are you riding in supercross next year and what are your expectations now fresh from your win at the US Open?

BM: "West. I'd like to ride West again. That's what I'm anticipating. Then I'd like to finish this series out in the top three and win some races. If everything over this off-season goes right there's no reason why I can't do it. I've got the right machinery under me and I know I can do it. Everything has to come together and I think it's coming together really well right now."

dbr: And you've got a few new guys on the team, including world championship contender Andrew McFarlane. How does it feel being the team's seasoned veteran?

BM: "It's going to be cool. We've got some new guys coming into the team. My team-mates last year were great but it's cool to have new riders and a new bike and stuff. It's exciting. I'm the old guy now after one year [laughs]!"



# US OPEN OF SX



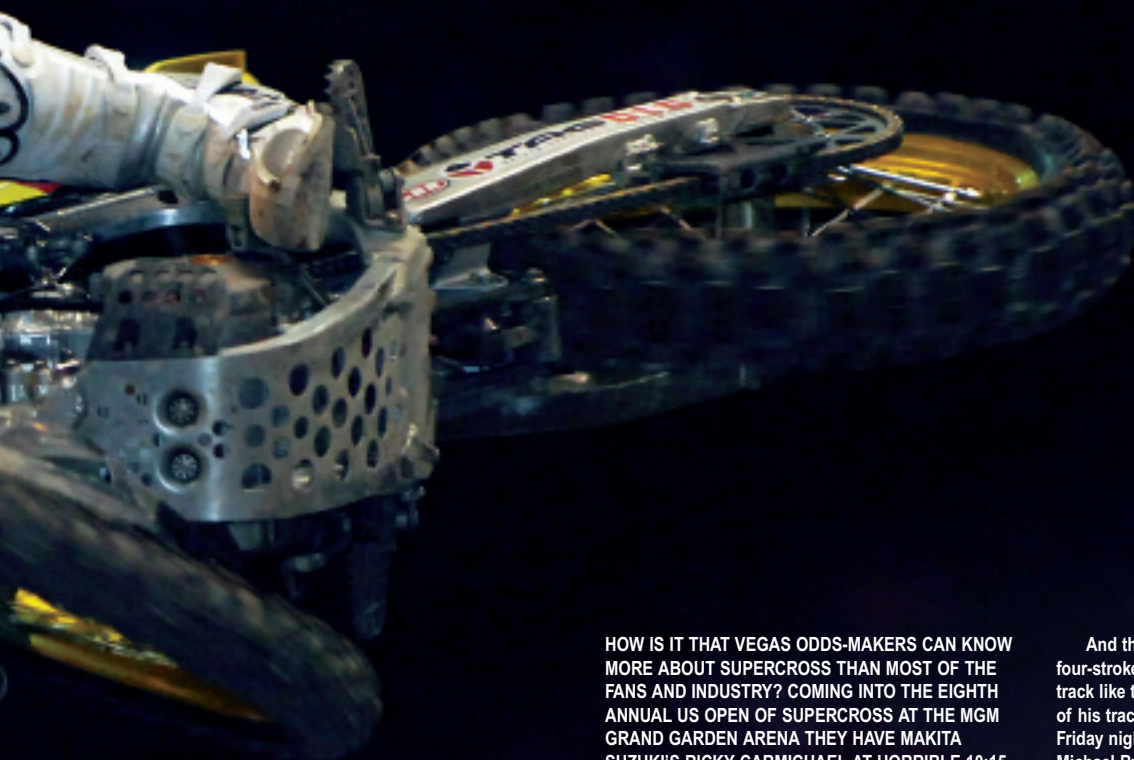
RC CAPS A MEMORABLE  
SEASON BY GOING 1-1 AT  
THE US OPEN – HIS FIRST  
SX ON A FOUR-STROKE



# SAFE BET!

The stakes are high in Vegas for the US Open of Supercross where odds-on favourite Ricky Carmichael sees his four-stroke gamble pay off

Words and photos by STEVE COX



HOW IS IT THAT VEGAS ODDS-MAKERS CAN KNOW MORE ABOUT SUPERCROSS THAN MOST OF THE FANS AND INDUSTRY? COMING INTO THE EIGHTH ANNUAL US OPEN OF SUPERCROSS AT THE MGM GRAND GARDEN ARENA THEY HAVE MAKITA SUZUKI'S RICKY CARMICHAEL AT HORRIBLE 10:15 ODDS (HORRIBLE, THAT IS, IF YOU WANT TO BET ON HIM). THEN THEY HAVE AMSOIL/CHAPARRAL HONDA'S KEVIN WINDHAM – WHO WON ONE SUPERCROSS IN 2005 – AT 3:1 AND KAWASAKI'S JAMES STEWART – WHO WON THREE SUPERCROSSES – AT 7:2.

BY THE TIME IT'S ANNOUNCED THAT STEWART WON'T BE TAKING PART IN THE RACE HIS ODDS HAVE FALLEN TO 2:1 – WHICH MEANS THAT QUITE A FEW PEOPLE LIKE HIS ODDS.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT IS QUITE A SURPRISE AS HE'D TAKEN PART IN THE PRESS CONFERENCE FOR THE RACE ON THURSDAY. "I'M JUST OUT HERE TRYING TO WIN," HE SAID AT THE TIME. "I FEEL LIKE I'M READY FOR THIS RACE AND I JUST WANT TO COME OUT HERE AND HAVE FUN. I WANT TO COME OUT HERE, HOPEFULLY, WITH A VICTORY AND JUST MOVE ON TO '06."

UNFORTUNATELY, HE COMES DOWN WITH AN ILLNESS ON FRIDAY MORNING AND IS TRANSPORTED TO THE HOSPITAL AFTER REPORTEDLY VOMITING AND PASSING OUT IN HIS MOTOR COACH.

WITH STEWART OUT, CARMICHAEL DECIDES TO RACE HIS RM-Z450 FOUR-STROKE – HIS FIRST EVER SUPERCROSS ON A THUMPER – AFTER KEEPING HIS OPTIONS OPEN AND GETTING THE AMA TO DO TECH INSPECTION ON BOTH HIS RM-Z450 AND HIS RM250 TWO-STROKE.

And there's nothing better for starts than a 450cc four-stroke – and starts are at a premium on a tight track like the US Open's. Carmichael makes good use of his tractable power and grabs the holeshot on Friday night. Although Kawasaki's KX450F-mounted Michael Byrne keeps him honest for much of the race, Carmichael runs away for a seemingly easy victory.

"It was tough," Carmichael says of racing the big thumper indoors. "I haven't prepared like I'd like to with the Motocross des Nations and stuff like that. We tried to jam it in a little bit and I got sick this week but it was fun. I think the team did a really good job and Bridgestone helped me out. Byrner kept me honest and Ernesto on the two-stroke kept him honest so it was fun. It was a learning experience for me on the 450 in supercross."

Fonseca comes from a top five start to third early in the race and finishes as the first two-stroke. "I don't like to make excuses but I think four-strokes have gotten so good and the track is so hard-packed – the dirt off the start was really slippery and hard-packed – I think the four-strokes are a little bit better for that," Fonseca says. "I managed to get an okay start and I was right behind Kevin in the first turn and got right behind Michael. I think it's tough to get good starts against the 450s. I think the four-strokes are getting better and they're the bikes to ride in the future."

In the surprise of the night, Windham slowly fades from a top three spot to an eventual fifth-placed finish. "It's been a while since I raced supercross – and even longer since I've rode the US Open here – and it's a little bit of a different ball game," says Windham, who last rode the US Open in 2001. "I finally just got a better head on my shoulders with a couple laps to go." ♦





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## US OPEN

### 250cc

1	Ricky Carmichael	1-1
2	Michael Byrne	2-3
3	Kevin Windham	5-2
4	Mike LaRocco	4-4
5	Jason Thomas	7-5
6	Nick Wey	6-6
7	Ernesto Fonseca	3-11
8	Kyle Lewis	8-8
9	Jeff Gibson	9-9
10	Rodrig Thain	15-7

### 125cc

1	Brett Metcalfe	1-2
2	Josh Hansen	2-6
3	Bobby Kiniry	4-4
4	Billy Laninovich	3-5
5	Andrew Short	12-1
6	Jake Weimer	7-3
7	Mike Brown	5-7
8	Dylan Lord	6-8
9	Kyle Mace	9-9
10	Logan Darien	8-10

**RICKY GETS THE DROP  
ON WINDHAM (#14)  
AND LAROCO (#5)**

## US OPEN OF SX

Carmichael again grabs the holeshot on night two and, once again, that's it. This time, however, it's Windham applying pressure and he keeps it on for about half of the race before small mistakes cause him to fall behind.

"Tonight was fine," Windham says. "I rode a lot better tonight. I was really frustrated after night one. I went back to fifth and I was really bummed about that, for sure. I just tried to come out and ride strong. I was on Ricky's heels there and kept him honest for the first 10 laps or so but then I just made a mistake. I need to be a lot more methodical and kind of robotic like Ricky is. Whatever he can do, he can do it for the whole time. I felt strong and the race here is really long. The laps are short but the 25 laps seem a lot longer than a normal supercross."

Fonseca crashes out just a few laps into the race and Byrne rides well


from a so-so start for third. "I've been working really hard and my team's been working really hard," Byrne says after his first race on a four-stroke. "This whole summer I've been riding my butt off on the two-stroke and to take that momentum to a supercross track on a new bike with a new start, it's refreshing."

But Carmichael is the man of the hour. The win is his third at the US Open and it caps a perfect season. He's now the 2005 World Supercross Champion, 2005 AMA Supercross Champion, 2005 AMA 250cc National Motocross Champion (during which series he never lost a single race overall), 2005 Motocross des Nations Champion (with Windham and Ivan Tedesco) and 2005 US Open Champion.

And he's talking about retiring at the end of next year. "It's been a special year, that's all I can say," Carmichael says. "Everyone asks what I do and the easiest way to explain it is that I just do my best. Right now my best happens to keep me up front but it's definitely getting harder, that's for sure. It's a special year. I feel happier for Suzuki than I do for myself. I sound like a broken record but I do. They came to the

plate and I'm glad to be the guy to get them that supercross title that they wanted. The only thing is that it's short-lived.

"I'm not sure how much longer I'm going to race. I don't know if I'm going to race in '07 full-time. I haven't made my mind up. We race a lot now. I want to do stuff for the sport and put my two cents in and make it grow. I think I'm going to race a long time. At this level? Full seasons? I don't know about that. I'm sure I won't go after 2007. I want to stay in this sport. I love being in the stadiums and working with Clear Channel and being out here.

"If something happened and I could never race again I'm happy with what I've accomplished. That's all that matters. If you're happy – and you have the piece of mind – then just race while you feel like racing. I'll do a lot of thinking in the next couple weeks and we'll see what happens. I've got some good opportunities in other places but I want to be around. I've done this since I was five years old and – like all of us – we're going to want to be here for a long time. This is the only thing we know." 





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## LITE SPEED!

**Metty's the main man in renamed 125cc class**

One year ago at the US Open, Aussie Brett Metcalfe made his Yamaha of Troy debut after two years on the Red Bull KTM team. At the time his last name was spelt 'Metcalf' on his jersey and 'Metcafe' on the back of his helmet. He was also on a YZ125. It obviously made an impression on him and after this year's US Open Lites he wants everyone to know who Brett Metcalfe is.

Pro-rookie Jake Weimer grabs the night one holeshot with Honda's Andrew Short, Red Bull KTM's Josh Hansen, Weimer's Amsoil/Chaparral Honda team-mate Billy Laninovich and Metcalfe giving chase. Metcalfe goes around Laninovich right away and Weimer goes down on lap two. About halfway through the race Metcalfe finds his way around Hansen and the top two looks set with Short and Metcalfe out front. However, with only a few laps remaining, Short goes down exiting a turn and when he restarts his bike

he immediately rides out of the arena with a reported gearbox problem.

"Yeah, something like that in the motor," Short says. "It's just one of those things that you can ride a million laps at the test track and nothing will happen and then you get to a race and... It definitely wasn't my mechanic's fault or anything like that. Everyone's doing their programme. This is just one of those things."

So Metcalfe scores his first win on American soil. "It's crazy. I haven't won a race in America in three years and I've had a lot of ups and downs," Metty says. "I've bounced back as hard as I could. It feels really good to finally win a race. Everyone's always been 'you have the talent, you just need to put it together' and finally I did this weekend. Hopefully everything goes well next season."

On night two Laninovich and Bobby Kiniry get so busy fighting over the holeshot that they go wide and Short sneaks right past Kiniry into second followed closely by Metcalfe. Short goes by Laninovich in the whoops and, two turns later, Laninovich makes an aggressive move to the inside of Short, hits Short's rear wheel

and goes down, handing second to Metcalfe. From there the race is over as Short races off to the night two win.

"I came off the gate decent," Short says. "It wasn't a holeshot but I got by some guys in the first couple laps. I rode good and I learned some things. The main thing is just to keep racing and learn what I can before I get to Anaheim."

But Metcalfe's second on night two is enough for the overall US Open 125cc title – the first win for the 2006 YZ250F.

"We got the '06 three weeks ago and I pretty much rode it every day," Metcalfe says. "We came up with a good set-up and it was pretty damned good straight out of the crate. We were pumped and we came here with a good bike, good set-up and came away with a win. I think I started in third and Laninovich was leading."

"He made a little mistake and Andrew and him kind of came together and it kind of played into my hands and I got into second. I just focused on second. I wanted to hang with Andrew for a bit but he was going quick so I just settled for the overall." 



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words by **JEFF KOCAN** courtesy of RacerX photo by **STEVE COX**

# HEROES AND VILLAINS

**There was a time when even RC was booed by the fans but he bounced back to become the people's champion – all of which offers some hope to current public enemy #1 Mike Alessi**

**L**ast month I fell all over myself trying to find new ways to compliment Ricky Carmichael – a task that becomes seemingly more difficult with each passing day. As you've probably heard by now, The Champ added the US Open of Supercross championship to his 2005 tally. That makes five titles in one year – THQ AMA Supercross, THQ World Supercross GP, AMA Motocross, the Motocross des Nations and the Open.

But perhaps even more remarkable than all of that is the way in which Carmichael now carries himself. If anyone in this sport is entitled to be cocky or arrogant it's RC but he has matured into that rare creature – the Graceful Champion.

There's popular saying in American football, attributed to former Dallas Cowboys coach Tom Landry. 'When you get to the end zone, I expect you to act like you've been there before.' Now the fact that Ricky indeed has been there before – many, many times over – certainly makes it easier for him to follow that advice. So why is it still so surprising when it happens?

It helps to recall that Carmichael was once one of the most hated men in the sport – for no good reason. Nobody who was around to hear them will ever forget the boos that rained down on him in 2001 from the stands of the very same MGM Grand Garden Arena where he won this year's US Open. What was the cause? Some were angry at his perceived disloyalty to Kawasaki when he switched to Honda while others were probably just tired of seeing him win all the time. And, in truth, his PR skills weren't quite what they are now. But he has since become a fan favourite across the nation and while we remember the boos, we do so with more than a little humiliation.

But the truth is Carmichael's 'dark' period probably helped him more in the long run than it hurt him. His turnaround – perceived or real – made him all the more likeable. The conversion from bad boy to good man, the public growth and maturity, is a symbol for the way we like to see ourselves. We've all got our skeletons but we like to at least cling to the hope that we might someday outlive them and sport gives us a vicarious means of doing just that.

All this might provide at least some hope to young Mike Alessi, the rider currently wearing the bull's eye in the States. You'd find it difficult to come across an Alessi apologist these days following his still somewhat shocking display at the season-ending Glen Helen National.

Going into the second moto Alessi was 10 points behind Ivan Tedesco for the title. Before the first lap was over, Tedesco went wide in a turn and Alessi slammed into the Pro Circuit Kawasaki pilot. Both riders hit the ground and while Tedesco's bike was still running, Alessi's had stopped. The KTM rider then proceeded to stand on Tedesco's bike in an effort to keep him from rejoining the race.



**MIKEY LEADS LANGSTON AT GLEN HELEN IN RACE ONE BEFORE IT ALL WENT TITS UP**


That little escapade cost Mike Alessi \$5,000 and his chance at being named AMA Rookie of the Year. He was also disqualified entirely from the Glen Helen event. It cost him literally thousands of fans.

Another popular saying around these parts is that you need to hit bottom before you can start your way back up. Well, Alessi just found the bottom. Unless he kills a man in cold blood it won't get much worse. So now comes the time to rebuild.

Just a few days ago my boss sent me Mike's latest Racer X column for editing. At the very end of the story he thanked some fans for sending him encouraging emails, saying, 'It made me smile when I needed to smile most and I won't ever forget your support'. I sent a reply email to Davey. 'Man, I just can't not like the kid.'

Mike Alessi is a smart kid. He will learn from this.

He'll think back on his actions – if he already hasn't – at great length and realise that what happened (not on the track but inside his own head) must not be allowed to happen again. He's got all the potential in the world and if he can learn to stay humble and respectful and keep his emotions in check he can still become a great champion. If Carmichael's fall from and return to grace is evidence of anything, it's the people's ability to accept that a man has changed his ways.

So, of course, Alessi's actions at Glen Helen were ridiculous, immature and frankly almost impossible to believe. Yes, stupid too. But were they unforgivable? Not a chance. Let's call them 'temporarily unforgivable'. I think he's got a hell of a future in front of him and I'm betting he'll go far in this sport. And I have a sneaking suspicion that the rest of the country feels the same way, even if they don't know it yet. 



bike test

*Bwwwaarp! Tony takes the '06 for a play in the sand...*

# BACK TO THE FUTURE

Words by Tony Marshall Photos by Suttty





**dbr's miniature marvels check out a trio of freshly refined Suzukis with a not-so-new blue and yellow makeover...**

**WITH NO** ground-breaking or particularly exciting new developments made to the zero-six Suzuki range – except a return to the yellow/blue colour scheme that was last seen around 1990 – it's all about refinement and revision.

The first noticeable 'refinement' is the fitting of braceless Renthal Fatbars. The Fatbars actually made their debut appearance on this year's 450 but they're now also fitted on the '06 two-strokes. However, the Z-250 still has those nasty steel bars that you'll want to throw in the bin – along with the stock chain and sprockets – before you even run your bike in.

And it's not just the bars that have been forgotten as it seriously seems like the development of the baby four-stroke has been forsaken for next year – but look out for an all-new bike in '07.

With no new 450s in the country I'll mostly be concentrating on the two two-strokes. Internal engine mods on the 125 should make for a smoother power delivery down low while piston, pipe and a modified intake area should – in theory – help beef up the ponies all round.

The two-fiddy engine also has changes to the intake side of things. New carbon-fibre reeds and a reshaped intake – when matched up with a freshly mapped ignition – are designed to smooth the power delivery at middle RPM, an area that has most definitely needed cleaning up on past models. But enough talk and on with some riding...

Here's a bit of useless MX trivia for you – Suzuki have won more 125cc motocross world championships than any other brand. That's quite impressive and so is their new bike – which to be fair isn't much different from the '05 or even '04 models.

The first thing I noticed is that you sort of sit in the bike rather than on it. I reckon it's partially because the seat height is one of the lowest on the market at 950mm (that's four whole centimetres lower than the toweringly-tall Husky 125) but also because the handlebars feel relatively high – which they have done on all Suzukis since they were raised in the clamps a few years back. ▀



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The motor is jetted almost perfectly with no bogging or flat spots felt – even in the deeper sand sections. To be honest I couldn't feel any real benefits from the new motor modifications but it's fair to say the Suzuki 125 has a strong motor for a standard bike although you do have to be on the top of your game if you're planning on out-powering similar standard riders who are on 250 four-strokes.

One area where 125 two-strokes can get the better of the four-bangers is in corners and this bike feels comfortable in all cornering situations. It behaves perfectly in loamy berms, tight ruts and even long flat-track style bends.

The suspension took one hell of a hammering at our secret test spot and I never really had any major problems with how the bike handled over the massive selection of bumps this place has to offer. From small braking bumps to massive holes the 125 took everything in its stride without bottoming out or doing anything silly.

The brakes are spot on – strong and progressive on all the bikes – but that's a given on any new bike these days. Another thing that we've grown to expect a lot from is gearshifting – the whole range of Suzuki's are slick shifters so there's no need to worry there either.

The larger two-stroke in the range is a lot of

fun to ride too. It shares the 'sit-in' feel that its baby brother has although I don't mind that too much as it helps you feel in control.

The 250 motor packs a lot of punch, pulling hard from the bottom and then not letting off for a single moment. It seems that the internal motor work and ignition changes have helped solve the Suzuki mid-range bogging problem of old as it's not as apparent on the '06 model. The top-end feels great too and there's plenty of over-rev there.

Moving on to handling and the front end of the bike is very positive and it's possible to get on tight lines you'd never think were possible to reach. The rear is only too happy to follow the front making the 250 Suzuki one of the best turning open class bikes on the market. Don't just think this bike likes to hog the inside line though – it's equally happy railing berms and I managed to drag my levers in the dirt on more than one occasion.

The suspension is smooth and progressive and there are no signs of nasty head-shake, mid-stroke harshness or bottoming out. High speed stability is great and the way this bike handles is very confidence-inspiring, making it perfect for everyone at pretty much every level.

We've already established the RM-Z is untouched for '05 although it does share the

same bold new graphics and semi-blue seatcover as the other models. When you sit on this bike it feels flatter than the RMs which makes it easier to move backwards or forwards on the bike. The controls on this bike are light and responsive and like most 250 four-strokes it's a lot of fun to ride as the motor is just so forgiving. From the strong and responsive bottom-end right up to the top this bike runs well and it also seems that Suzuki have cured the hot start problem which plagued the earlier models.

The suspension on this bike is good even though it's running Kayaba forks and shock as opposed to the Showas that suspend the others. I feel that the RM-Z possibly has the best feel of the three in a from-the-crate state as it tracks well and seems to handle the braking bumps even better than the others.

All three bikes are definitely good enough to win in stock trim anywhere up to national level. I'd say the 250 two-stroke is the most competitive of the bunch while the RM-Z is the most fun to ride. The 125 two-stroke is a great bike but I feel it's not quite up to par with the four-strokes that it has to run against in its class. That's not to say it's not a winning bike – you'd just have to ride it harder to come out on top.



**The 125's Showas get a thorough seeing to**

**When he kept the revs up Chris was impressed with the way the 125 turns**





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*The 250cc two-stroker gets the thumbs-up from Chris!*

### second opinion

CHRIS CONCLUDES

Words by Chris Hammal

*As the years go by we see fewer and fewer actual 125s in the 125 class and after riding a 125 and a 250F back to back it's easy to see why they're a dying breed. When I first threw my leg over the smallest member of the Suzuki family it felt very comfy and had a nice normal feel to it all – which is strange since I haven't rode a 125 Suzuki in a good few years. The seat height is quite low with a low tank while the bars and controls feel nice and light with Renthal Fatbars coming as standard being a very nice touch.*

*Once out on the track I found this bike hard work. I feel it has no bottom-end at all and in the corners you have to scream the nuts out of it to keep it going otherwise the motor dies and the front end sinks into the deep berms. Maybe on a hardpack track it wouldn't be so bad...*

*Aside from the lack of low-end it does have loads of power all the way up through the rest of the range. When you can keep the revs up it's very good in the corners – it turns anywhere you point it and the ride position felt good and stable.*

*The Showa front and rear suspension felt great on this rough whooped-out track – both ends work well together and soak up the rough stuff. The back end doesn't kick and swap about on the big rollers coming out of corners like I would have expected from a standard bike and along the straights it has a good sturdy feel which gave me more and more confidence as I put the laps in.*

*The 250 two-stroke feels a lot like the 125 when it comes to the riding position. Once fired up this bike sounds great with good snappy throttle response and out on the track it doesn't disappoint either.*

*It has loads of power and it's very usable all the way through the rev range. In the corners you can roll the throttle on and then it keeps on pulling through the gears. The overall feel of the bike is good and it has a nice safe feel to it – like it won't bite back at any time. The Showa suspension works great – it didn't feel quite as good as on the 125 but that might have been due to the heavier feel of the bike and the more powerful motor.*

*The bike tracked through the big rollers in a straight line and soaked them up well without stepping out of line once. This bike's also great in the corners – it turns on a dime and goes wherever you point it.*

*First thing I noticed after I threw a leg over the 250 four-banger was that the Renthals that are standard on the two-strokes are missing and in their place are some bad shaped bars that feel wider than a Hummer.*

*Apart from that the ride position is good, the seat height is great and the bars are at a nice height in the clamps. The motor's great too, it has loads of smooth power which is there as soon as the throttle is wound open – okay, so it fades a little right at the top but it is a four-stroke. The handling is great – just like the other two – but different to them as it has Kayaba suspension. It feels a bit harder but still soaks up the rough stuff well. The more I rode this bike the more confidence I felt in it. It's a great bike that anyone can enjoy with lots of power and good handling.*



Suzuki's 250 pulls hard from the bottom all the way through the range



## specifications

### RM-Z 250

**Capacity:** 249cc  
**Bore and stroke:** 77mm x 53.6mm  
**Transmission:** Five-speed  
**Carburettor:** Keihin FCR37mm  
**Front suspension:** Kayaba 48mm fork  
**Rear suspension:** Kayaba shock  
**Front brake:** Disc  
**Rear brake:** Disc  
**Wheelbase:** 1475mm  
**Seat height:** 960mm  
**Dry weight:** 92.5kg

### RM125

**Capacity:** 124cc  
**Bore and stroke:** 54mm x 54.5mm  
**Transmission:** Five-speed  
**Carburettor:** Mikuni TMX38SS  
**Front suspension:** Showa fork  
**Rear suspension:** Showa shock  
**Front brake:** Disc  
**Rear brake:** Disc  
**Wheelbase:** 1450mm  
**Seat height:** 950mm  
**Dry weight:** 87kg

### RM250

**Capacity:** 249cc  
**Bore and stroke:** 66.4mm x 72mm  
**Transmission:** Five-speed  
**Carburettor:** Keihin PWK38S  
**Front suspension:** Showa fork  
**Rear suspension:** Showa shock  
**Front brake:** Disc  
**Rear brake:** Disc  
**Wheelbase:** 1470mm  
**Seat height:** 950mm  
**Dry weight:** 96kg



**Stretching is important before you start your training session**

**Jogging Jim Murro hits the treadmill next to Alan...**



**...before putting in some more CV work on the static cycle**



# NO PAIN, NO GAIN!

**Cold, wet winter nights are not the best motivation for off-season training but now's the time to start preparing for the spring**

Words by Alan Milway Photos by Paul Thomas/Motion Imaging

**MAKE NO** mistake about it, championships are won and lost in the off-season. The hard work put in through the winter will make all the difference to your results come March and onwards – something it's always worth remembering when the nights are dark, the wind is blowing and the motivation is low!

At the start of a new season there are riders who you suddenly notice, riders who have moved up a gear and those that for some unknown reason are now at another level. These are the riders who managed to stay focussed and worked hard on their fitness and bike skills over the winter.

One rider who has the hard work attitude is MX2 rider Jim Murro. Putting in the long hours when no-one is there and pushing himself has led to a successful first season in the British championship MX2 class and now an exciting deal with KTM for 2006. And this will surely help motivate him further this winter when he's putting the hours in on the practice track and in the gym looking forward to spring. It's a chain reaction!

Winter training can be divided into two main categories – off-season training and pre-season training. The off-season takes us up to around six weeks before the season starts and then we

can term it pre-season. The ultimate aim is to be completely ready for the season's start and this year for many it was that lovely crisp, sunny day at Hawkstone Park.

We need to plan the off-season well as it forms the backbone of the fitness you'll have over the course of the season. Many people who don't understand the physiological principles of training may end up putting in a lot of very hard work – but directed in the wrong areas – and this leads to them having unforeseen problems and disappointing fitness results. Training at very high intensity or doing predominantly strength-based training are two very good examples of this.

The first thing we must do is train for cardiovascular endurance. This is exercise in the range of 50-80 per cent maximum effort for prolonged periods, several times per week. The duration of exercise is a key factor and for many this means upping the duration – 10-15 minutes twice a week just won't cut it!

This endurance training is training that does not build up high levels of lactic acid, can be sustained for up to and over an hour in duration but is still taxing on the heart and lungs. There are many muscular adaptations that take place and these are important as increased aerobic

capacity is vital in improving your endurance performance.

Aerobic muscle fibres (known as type one) increase in size, there is an increased blood supply to the working muscles and there is an increased reliance on fats as a fuel – sparing carbohydrate so exercise can be sustained longer. These are some of the adaptations to endurance exercise and for two or three 30-minute motos you are going to be grateful for all of these!

One thing important to remember is that training for strength, power and speed has little effect on aerobic capacity. This high intensity exercise is of course very important for MX but, as it does not improve aerobic capacity, it needs to be added to the winter plan later. The endurance exercise builds a big 'base' of fitness from which to work on and the improvement in your aerobic capacity will aid the high intensity work when it is added to this foundation pre-season.

Winter in the UK is not very conducive to spending prolonged periods of time outside on a bicycle or running on a dark wet street so a lot of people will head to a gym to work out. So what is the best way to use the facilities at a gym?



*Exercises that work the upper and lower body are great for MX*



*Work on weak areas over the winter so you can come out fighting in the spring*

### medical milway

Alan Milway is a qualified sports scientist who runs MX Fitness specialising in training motocross and enduro riders. For more information on how Alan can help you train go to his website [www.mxfitness.co.uk](http://www.mxfitness.co.uk) or call him on 07810 827427

Staying on one piece of equipment for up to an hour isn't much fun. Breaking cardio sessions into two or three different exercises will give variety but also still give the training response necessary (consistently raised heart rate). Here are some useful training tips for endurance sessions in the gym.

- \* Find your ideal training range – exercise at around 60 per cent maximum effort will predominantly train to burn fat and be a good starting point to exercise, whereas raising this to 80-85 per cent max will increase your aerobic capacity and enable you to go harder for longer. Gradually build up intensity – but not at the sacrifice of duration (yet).

- \* A heart rate monitor is a very useful way to find your ideal training range and monitor fitness and recovery. They are now relatively cheap and taking resting heart rate first thing in the morning will help you gauge your fitness and help you spot any sickness or fatigue that is creeping in.

- \* Exercises that train upper and lower body muscles are very appropriate for MX – rowing, the cross trainer and swimming are three very

good examples and develop muscular fatigue resistance in major muscle groups.

- \* Duration of exercise is very important to adapting the body and giving increased aerobic capacity. Aim for training sessions of 45 minutes to one hour three times a week at least and try to incorporate sessions of around two hours to two-and-a-half hours a few times per month.

A long bike ride every weekend is ideal and will train the body to utilise fuel sparingly and cope with long sustained effort without the big knock on of soreness from joints or muscles sometimes seen with running.

- \* Having said this, running is a great way to get your heart rate high and gives a good intensive workout – but wear proper running shoes and aim to run on soft ground where possible.

- \* Endurance exercise should form a good part of your training week in the off-season. A lot of people will go to the weights before they are doing enough endurance training. Weights sessions compliment endurance for MX training very well and are important but get the proportion right.

- \* Try to have three sessions a week of training. If you are training regularly at the moment, use one or two sessions a week on top of this to work on weak areas – muscular strength can be increased and core stability can be greatly improved (more on this in my next article).

Now is the time to put the effort into your training and plan your weeks well up to Christmas. Routine really is the key and joining a gym is a good way to keep you motivated and training regularly. This routine will give you momentum as you approach the New Year and as you build intensity remember that you are looking for that end point of the winter and the chance to get racing again.

Long, sustained effort doesn't sound like the ideal welcome to winter but make it fun by varying sessions in the gym and the pool and when the gate drops and you stay out front instead of fading you'll know it has been worth it!

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# WALKER'S WORLD



# DIY!

**While some four-stroke maintenance jobs call for a degree in engineering, a handful of pain-killers and a long lie-down in a darkened room, the equivalent two-stroke task can quite often be handled at home with just a few tools and a methodical approach**

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by Ray Chuss

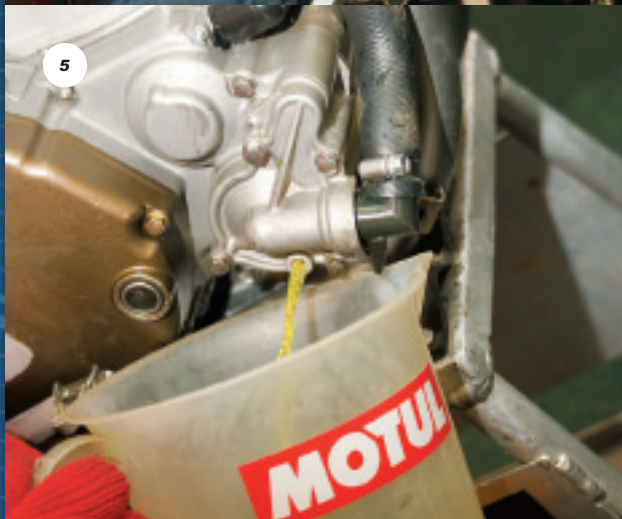
**THE FOUR**-stroke revolution's in full swing as the easy-to-ride weapons are flying off the showroom floors again for the '06 season. This is good in a lot of ways but then there is the not-so-small problem of the home maintenance schedule for most four-popper owners.

For example, a four-stroke top-end rebuild is definitely beyond most people's mechanical capabilities – cam chains, tensioners, valves and timing give most off-roaders a migraine!

This is not the same with a two-stroke and there's something of a revival in the two-five-o two-stroke market as a lot of four-stroke owners are going back to two-smokers as they're easier to work on and even jobs like a top-end rebuild can be done by most owners as long as you take your time and work in a reasonably clean, methodical way.







## toolbox

### YOU WILL NEED...

- Selection of T-bars
- Small point-nosed pliers
- Torque wrench
- Sockets
- Paper towel
- Exhaust spring puller
- Eight, 10, 12 and 14mm spanners
- Two-stroke oil
- Fluid container
- Before you start the job make sure you have all the correct parts in your piston kit – this should include a piston, ring or rings, gudgeon pin, small end bearing, two circlips, a base gasket plus head gasket or o-rings.

- 1 Remove the seat on your lovely sparkly weapon of choice.
- 2 Disconnect the fuel line, remove all retaining bolts and take off the tank and rad shrouds.
- 3 The area you're going to work on must be free from all debris which could fall into the motor as it's being worked on. This is really important so spend a bit of time moving things like wires and cables around to make absolutely sure there is no loose crud. Time taken now could make the difference between a dream job and an absolute nightmare!
- 4 Pop the springs off the front of your exhaust pipe and remove all the bolts before slipping the zooster pipe from its place of residence.

- 5 Drain the radiators of coolant at this stage. If you forget to drain the cooling system and you loosen the head, the coolant could get inside the motor. When the coolant is drained you can undo the clips and bolts and move the rads out of the way.  
I move them but on some bikes it's best to remove the rads completely so you have plenty of room to work. Make sure you keep all jubilee clips in a safe and orderly place.
- 6 If your bike is cylinder induction loosen the carb clips and slowly remove the carb. Make sure no dirt falls from the carb into the reed valve (at this stage there should be no dirt left to fall). A lot of engines are crankcase induction so there is no need to remove the carb when doing a top-end rebuild. ▶

GEOFF WALKER's one of the most respected MX technicians in the country (well, so he tells us) with a CV that reads like a who's who of British MX. In the 14 years he's been in the game, the 34-year-old Irishman's spun spanners for the likes of Carl Nunn, Tom Church, Mark Hucklebridge, Robbie Herring, Philippe Dupasquier and Sully.

During this time he's worked for JHK Kawasaki Japan, Kawasaki UK, Bott KTM and RWJ HRC Honda where he helped Herring to the '96 British Open title. A former racer and Pro-ranked downhill MTBer, Geoff's notoriously inept at getting his copy and photos in on time, causing huge headaches in the dbr office – but we still love/tolerate his big-chinned Oirishness...



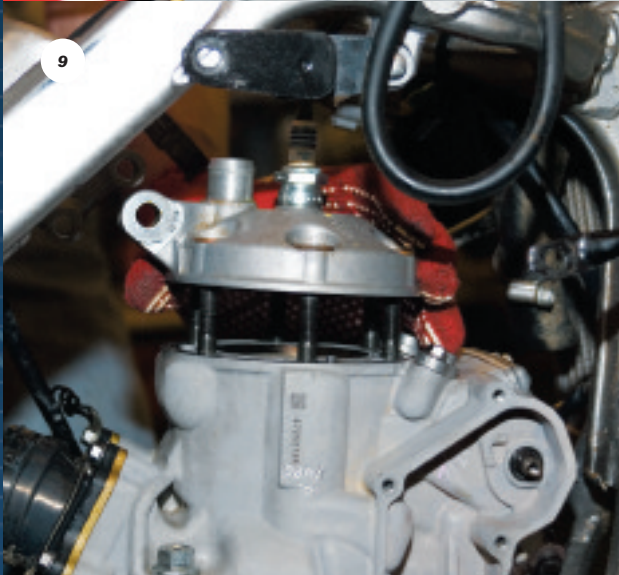
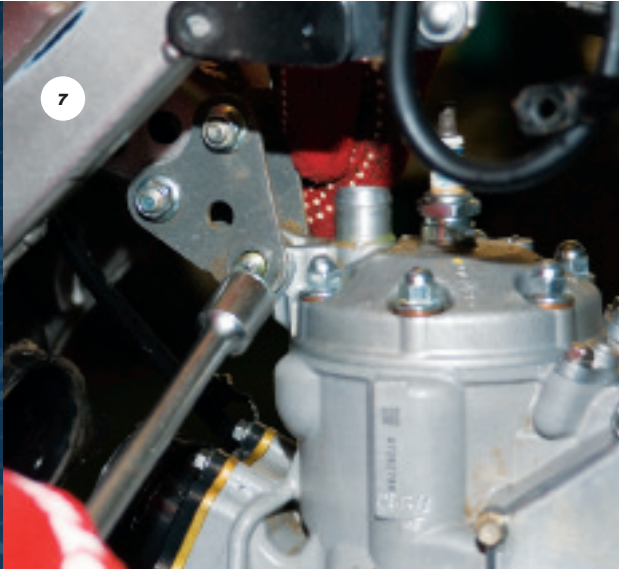


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**7** Pretty much all bikes have brackets that attach the head to the frame. Now is as good a time as any to remove these little triangular holding devices.

**8** Most modern two-stroke engines run a power-valve system. This system is normally connected by a pull or push rod system which actuates as the revs increase to open the exhaust and sub ports to boost power. This rod or system will have to be disconnected to go any further in the job. Take your time at this stage to remember how it refits back into place in order.

**9** With everything all twinkly sparkly the head can be removed and then cleaned ready for re-fitting.

**10** Drop the piston to bottom dead centre (the lowest point) and undo the cylinder bolts. Slowly remove the cylinder and base gasket then slip a clean piece of paper towel onto the open motor to stop any crap going in there.

**11** Choose a side – any side – and with the small point-nose pliers carefully remove one of the retaining piston circlips. Make sure the paper towel is still in place in the crankcases as you do not want a circlip falling into the crank area. That would be bad, that would be really bad, in fact that would be just about the baddest thing ever, right up there on the bad scale with catching your parents getting it on in the kitchen – which is a pretty nasty thought don't ya think?

**12** Before you fit the new piston in place you should fit the new rings and one circlip onto the piston as well as putting your new base gasket on.

The rings normally have some kind of marking on them which indicates which way they should be fitted onto the piston. The Kawasaki rings are marked with an R.

Lightly oil the rings and fit them onto the piston. The best way to do this is to start by slipping one end of the ring into place then simply running your finger around the top of the ring until it slips into place.

Check that the ring or rings move freely in and out of the ring groove and they're located on the locating peg when you fit them on to the piston. Any binding of the rings and you will have little or no compression. ▶



**IN TIMES OF CHANGE..  
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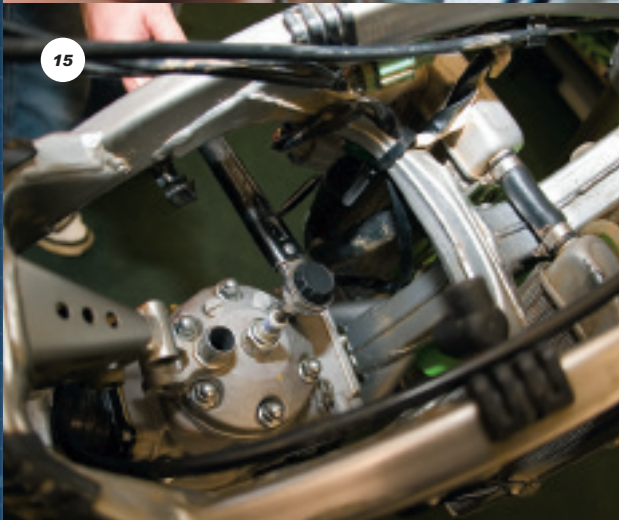
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**13** Place the piston onto the small end where your new and oiled small bearing has been fitted and slide the new gudgeon pin through and into place, then clip the second circlip into place in its groove. Make sure the clips are securely in place because if one comes out it will wreck your cylinder!

**14** When the piston is in place make sure you give the piston and the cylinder a light coating of two-stroke oil before you hold and compress the rings in place before carefully fitting the cylinder.

Make sure you do not force the cylinder into place as it must fit nicely over the piston. You may need an extra pair of hands and eyes at this stage just to make sure you get everything in the correct place.

When the cylinder is in place, hold the top

down and slowly kick the motor over to make sure nothing's out of place before fitting and tightening the cylinder bolts down. Always tighten in this pattern. Front right, back left, back right, front left. When the cylinder is in place you can reconnect your power valve.

**15** Fit your new head gasket or o-rings before you re-fit the head. Torque the head down to your manufacturer's spec. Tighten the head down in a criss-cross pattern so it goes down nice and evenly. With the head tightened down, bolt the head stays back in place and connect all the rad hoses and bolt the rads into place.

**16** The next thing on the hit list is the carbashooter! Clean and drain the carb and also clean the airbox boot as you don't need to be shooting any crud straight back into the

twinkly sparkly top-end. Fit everything back into place and then tighten the clips. Then check the exhaust pipe for damage and worn o-rings. If all is good replace your pipe onto your steed.

**17** This step signals that you're almost there. Make sure your coolant drain bolt is replaced and tight before you fill the cooling system. Take your time filling the system as you must make sure there are no air locks in the system. Lean the bike over as you fill it to clear any air in the system.

**18** That's pretty much it. Once your coolant is in the motor is 'locked'. Replace the tank and rad scoops then fit a clean air filter before slapping on the seat and going on a nice steady half-hour break-in ride. Once this is done you're all ready to race!





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# RED BARON!

It carried Josh Coppins to the British MXI championship and second in the world - now we get to ride Lizzard's 450cc CAS Honda

Words by Tony Marshall Photos by rayarcher.com







**I WAS** a little caught out by Josh's bike – for some reason I was expecting a hard-hitting motor. I was told by someone within Honda that his bike was even harder hitting than Pichon's so I was expecting to jump on the bike and really hate the experience.

I'm certainly not someone who likes to ride a bike that's hard hitting although, admittedly, this type of power does have its advantages on certain parts of a track and in certain situations.

So I expected Josh's bike to zap the energy out of me but it wasn't long before I noticed that his bike was completely the opposite to what I was expecting.

After a few turns it was clear how mellow this bike is. I rode Pichon's bike for a few laps at

Lierop and that was really hard-hitting from the bottom – I've ridden a few of his bikes in the past and they've always been like that – so when I got on Josh's I was surprised to find how calm it was. It was a pleasure to ride. This for me shows how times have changed as I feel that generally motors tend to be a bit smoother to suit the more modern style of riding.

Having said that, the power was pretty instant but it just never had a real snappy, sharp powerband. It was quite mellow but obviously very, very strong and controllable. This was clear after a few laps around Matchams once I was settled in on the bike.

The motor feels pretty much like the '06 production model only with a bit more power all

the way through the range. Josh's bike is actually based around a production bike with bolt-on parts that pretty much anyone can get hold of. There are a few modifications on the engine side of things and the suspension is factory but with the right money and know-how you could go out and make a fairly faithful replica – although the average rider wouldn't benefit from this!

As I said before the motor's very, very strong and this allows you to short-shift as the motor's so torquey. You could pull gears pretty much immediately and this bike will just pull it right the way through. And even though it's not that hard-hitting on the bottom, when I threw it into some deep, sandy berms it didn't





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hesitate at all exiting them.

They'd graded the track for us following the British championship round which was a good job as the suspension on Josh's bike is very hard – a bit like Pichon's to be honest with the top part of the stroke especially feeling real stiff.

I could have changed it but the whole point of a test like this is keeping the bike exactly as the rider has it – I wouldn't even ask for the handlebar position to be changed (although Josh actually likes the bars in pretty much the same position as I do).

Like I said, Josh likes his suspension stiff and the rear end caught me out through the whoops on my first lap. I was only on a steady lap but I didn't hit the first couple too square and I was chopped about right the way through – at one point I didn't think I was going to save it. Imagine if I'd slung the British champ's bike down the track on my first lap! Not the best way to get your confidence up and it took me a further 10 or 15 minutes to recover... ▶

coppins' bike test

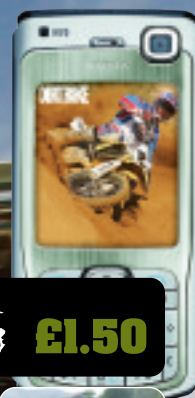




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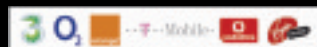
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Generally speaking the biggest problem with GP riders' bikes is that they have the suspension so stiff because they're hitting things so much harder than an average rider. It takes a lot of confidence to be able to go fast on a bike like this because it's hard to feel settled unless you're right on it as the feel you get back from the suspension isn't comfortable at sighting lap speed.

But after a few laps I could feel my confidence coming back and as I began to pick up the speed I started to get a better feel from the suspension and chassis as the faster you hit things the better it soaks them up. Matchams has got some big jumps now and after a few laps I was hitting them hard which was definitely the way forward as the bike responded so much better. When I did come up short over the big tabletops – and it happened a couple of times – the landing was a bit on the harsh side.

Handling is closely linked to suspension so it's no surprise that Josh's bike handles better and better the harder you ride it. On the first few laps it felt as though the front end wanted to

push away but once I was up to speed and putting in some fast laps I found it responded in the kind of way you'd expect from a bike that's just carried its rider to second in the world. There was no head shake and the more I picked my speed up the better it behaved.

There are a number of other nice little touches that add to the factory feel of Josh's bike. For starters the seat's harder than stock which is no surprise – it's better for moving around on the bike and changes the riding position. And Josh runs clear gripper panels on the airbox and sidepanels which is a great idea. These will help him use his legs to stay in control without upsetting any sponsors!

It's always a pleasure to be able to jump on some of the top guys' bikes just to see what direction they're going in. But production bikes now are probably further developed than my race bike was back when I was doing GPs so if you're an average rider who fancies building themselves a Coppins replica don't! A totally stock bike maybe with an after-market exhaust system would work better.



*Long wheelbase or short test rider? You decide...*



# SMASH HIT!

**Stefan Merriman has had the speed needed to win the WEC Enduro 2 title this season – unfortunately for the Aussie, he's also had the crashes needed to lose it as well...**



Stefan gives the newest Merriman a lift

"I tried to ride on but I was in incredible pain. I could only stand on one leg so there was no way I was going to be able to race.

"I knew that competing against Samuli Aro was going to be difficult and riding Yamaha's WR450 wasn't going to be easy either. It's a bit too much bike for me. Really, the right sized bike for me is the 250cc four-stroke or even a 125. But I'd spent a year in the Enduro 1 class, won the world title and decided to change – it's unusual for me to spend two years on the same bike. Riding the 450 brought new motivation and a fresh challenge."

Despite the new challenge of racing a WR450F – and having DNFed day one of the second round of the '05 series through injury – Merriman did the seemingly impossible and returned to competition on day two in Portugal. And topped the E2 class! The WEC paddock was stunned...

"The team's Italian doctor gave me some really strong painkillers for day two," admits Merriman, "but I found it really difficult to ride and thought that there was no way I was going to be able to continue. Thankfully the painkillers worked and I was able to ride okay. I had to push and try and win because it is impossible to ride at 90 per cent just in the hope of getting

disappointment," recalls Stefan. "I didn't even crash, which is what made it so frustrating. I knew then that I would have a hard job getting back on top in the E2 class. But it was still possible. I knew that I had to just get back winning as soon as I could."

With the third round of the series staged in Italy, the home race for Stefan's UFO Corse Yamaha team, the winning result he wanted and needed failed to materialise. Crashing as he neared the end of the second special test on day one, Merriman suffered his most serious injury to date and was rushed to hospital. Having taken a handlebar in the stomach he was diagnosed as having a ruptured spleen.

Following a three-hour operation – and having lost a further 50 championship points – Merriman knew that baring injury or mechanical problems Aro or French hotshot Fabien Planet would now claim the E2 title. With his chances of winning in '05 more or less over, most expected the highly-focused Aussie to miss the fourth round of the championship, return to full fitness and make his return to WEC competition at the Czech Republic GP eight weeks later. They were wrong!

Just four weeks after his surgery Stefan was back in the saddle and preparing for the start of

Words and photos by Jonty Edmunds

**WINNING THE '05 Enduro 2 World Championship** was never going to be easy for UFO Corse Yamaha rider Stefan Merriman. Not because he lacked the speed, confidence or fitness to win – far from it – but because '05 would see the pint-sized Aussie compete head-to-head against one of his fiercest rivals, Finland's Samuli Aro.

Knowing that he would have to perform at his very best if he was going to claim a fifth world title, Merriman's eighth season of European competition turned out to be his most disappointing. Winning 11 out of 18 days in the E2 class this season – as well as finishing as runner-up on three more – a perfect start to the year at the WEC's opener in Spain was closely followed by disappointment, injury and soon after the end of his championship aspirations.

After showing the world just how fast a competitor he was aboard Yamaha's WR450F by winning the Enduro 2 class of the '04 ISDE in Poland, Merriman and Yamaha's hopes of a dream season ended long before the WEC series reached the halfway point.

Claiming a double class win at the wetter than expected season opener in Guadalajara in Spain, Merriman's title hopes were on track – despite a below par performance. But no sooner had the series reached Portugal for the second stop of the nine-round series the Yamaha rider's troubles began. Landing awkwardly from a jump – and badly tweaking his left knee in the process – Merriman knew immediately that something was badly wrong. In serious pain he was forced to stop. And in doing so he waved goodbye to 25 very important championship points.

"I knew that winning this season wasn't going to be easy for a number of reasons – I just wasn't expecting injury to be one of them," explains Stefan. "My knee gave way underneath me when I landed and I heard a cracking noise and knew something wasn't right," he adds.



some points. I just tried to forget about my knee as much as possible and the day went well."

The injury was a torn medial ligament in his left knee and Merriman was fortunate that he didn't require surgery. Following 10 days of rest, daily physio and laser treatment Stefan was ready to forget his troubled start to the season and get himself back in the title race. With one month to re-group in readiness for the third round of the championship, day wins – and lots of them – were the only thing that would keep Stefan's title hopes alive.

"Injuring my knee was a massive

the WEC's second Spanish GP as if nothing had happened. "I knew that my championship hopes were pretty much over so there was no pressure on me," he recalls. "Getting injured is a part of the job I do, it's just how it is. Yeah, it's disappointing but you just have to deal with it. After it happened I wanted to try and win every day, collect my day bonuses and look to the future."

Talking down his chances of a good result before the race despite remaining positive about his return from injury, Stefan proved to be as tough as he is fast and amazingly topped



*Two bad injuries haven't stopped Stefan winning races this season but they have cost him a shedload of points*





Even Merriman admits he's more suited to a 250F but he's been the quickest rider this year aboard the 450 thumper



the E2 class on both days. Having been told that he wouldn't be able to start training for four weeks after his surgery, the GP of Gernika just happened to be one month after his operation. In typical Merriman style – and for the second time in '05 – he shocked the WEC paddock with his gritty determination and seemingly inextinguishable will to win.

"I didn't have any problems with my stomach because the tests were pretty smooth. I think that if the race had been in Finland with lots of whooped out straights then I would have struggled. I started to get a little tired towards the end of day one but I felt good on day two. To be honest I felt





better than I thought I would."

Despite his two day wins Stefan still trailed a long, long way behind the E2 championship leaders. Placing as runner-up to Samuli Aro on both days of the fifth round of the series, Merriman topped the class at the GP of France to prove once again that had it not been for his injury-hit start to the series he would most certainly be in contention for championship honours.

With his bad luck seemingly behind him and with just three rounds of the '05 WEC series remaining, the championship headed north to Heinola in Finland. Effectively in Aro's backyard, the fight between last year's Enduro 3 world

champion and Merriman – last year's Enduro 1 world champion – failed to materialise as Merriman proved to be the E2 class' fastest rider on both days. But the official results told a very different story.

Disqualified from day one for refuelling at a roadside petrol station – a big no-no as far as the FIM's Commission of Enduro and Rally are concerned – Merriman came away from Finland having collected his fourth zero score of the season.

"I know that I crashed out of three days of the championship and didn't score any points at those races which isn't good when you're trying to win a title," offers Merriman, "but the new

points system in the world championship is wrong, I think."

With the difference between winning and placing as runner-up five points before the WEC was revamped for the '04 season, now three points separate the two top scoring positions in all classes.

"If you win then you should be rewarded for that and that means getting a handful more points than the second place rider, not just three points. They want the class titles to be decided at the last round of the championship. I don't think that's right. Winning should bring with it a five-point advantage over the runner-up. With a points system that gives the winner a five-point advantage you can make up the loss of a day in just five days of competition."

With his title hopes well and truly over following Finland, Merriman entered the final two rounds of the series hoping to simply win more races, collect his day bonuses and prove once again that had it not been for injury '05 could have turned out very different.

Despite winning on both days in Greece, Merriman could do nothing to stop Aro from claiming the '05 Enduro 2 world championship title. With Aro openly admitting after the race that Merriman had – on more occasions than not – been the fastest rider in the class, the Finn also proclaimed that he had been the best. Avoiding injury, winning some races and remaining consistent throughout the entire series is what netted Aro the title and not Merriman.

At the final round of the series Merriman's results pretty much summed up his season of highs and lows. Winning on day one to top the E2 podium for the 11th time, Stefan saw his day two result spoiled by a crash.

Despite failing to win the Enduro 2 world title Stefan did manage to salvage something from his injury-hit season and topped the Enduro 2 class at the 80th ISDE staged in Slovakia. Beating Aro in the process – and finishing as runner-up to David Knight in the overall Scratch classification – Merriman's class win went some way towards making up for his lack of world championship success.

"As it turned out I got bucked off the 450 a few too many times to win the world championship this season," explains Stefan. "It's disappointing that things didn't work out this year but that's racing. I won world titles in '03 and '04 so I just have to focus on making sure I am ready for the start of next season."

"Winning is never easy but it is what I start each season wanting to do. Next year will be no different."



*The 125's light and flickable but you have to ride it hard*

# RAINBOW WARRIORS!

**What are red, yellow and blue and rip all over? The '06 enduro Gassers of course...**

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by Suttty

**THE GAS** Gas range of enduro machines was one of the surprise packages of 2005 for me. I didn't really know what to expect from the bikes before I rode them but when I did I found that they were a great all-round bike for every level of enduro and trail rider out there.

For the '06 launch – held in the sunny north – I drove for four hours with a high level of excitement as I anticipated getting my hands on the two-stroke Gassers. The high level of

excitement was on two counts – A) the prospect of riding the bikes excited me and B) the fact that Lawless and the Sutt Dawg were going to be there always brings a smile to my Oirish chops. This is because Sutton loves taking a challenging shot and he will take it at all costs even if it brings injury to me, Sean or himself!

As always John 'Big Mac for brekkie' Shirt Jnr was there bang on time to get the launch up and running. No, really, he was. Honestly.





Anyway...the '06 range once again consists of the 125, 200, 250 and 300 models with the colours for '06 being yellow for the 125 and 200, red for the 250 and blue for the 300 models. The brightly coloured plastics perfectly compliment the new black deltabox frame and in my opinion they look mega.

As well as being a good looking package it's a race ready one too! The factory aim to put the bike together so you won't have to buy any

extras. That's why they've fitted V-Force reed blocks and dual map ignitions as standard. The point is that they want you to buy one, then go and race it. Simple!

Now 125cc two-strokes are a blast – that's a fact and the Gas Gas 125 is definitely a fun bike to ride. The motor on the tiddler has to be ridden pretty hard to get the best from it. This is the case with most 125 motors although the '06 125 engine felt like it had to be revved more

than its predecessor to find the power.

This probably has something to do with the new EU2 catalysed exhaust system – the system seems a little restrictive. This problem could be fixed with a little time spent re-jetting. When riding the 125 hard, the carburation is less of a problem but when you get into the tighter, technical going the motor has a tendency to die at the wrong time which could get you into a bit of trouble. ►





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This small problem is easily sorted though and the bike was straight out of the crate so I'm sure Shirty and the boys will have any small jetting issues sorted before the puppy hits the high streets.

The light feeling to the tiddler is a great thing. It inspires confidence to find the best from the motor. I'm a little on the large side for the 125 (no \*\*\*t Sherlock – Suttty) but the suspension dealt with most things I threw at it on the day, although – as with all next year's Gassers – the forks have come with a slightly too soft feel to them.

To wrap up on the 125, I have to say that with a little bit of work to find the best from the engine the '06 125 Gasser will certainly be at the top of the 125cc two-stroke enduro tree.

The 200 Gasser is a favourite of mine as it gives that little extra power without a great increase in the overall weight of the bike. In short, the 200 has the best of both worlds. I personally really like 200cc off-road bikes and the Gas Gas is right up there on the list of 200cc off-road bikes that I love.

The bike just loved to be abused – the more stick you give the 200 Gasser the more it likes it. This thing took me everywhere I wanted to go with ease and in fact it asked me to do some crazy things. That's right – it asked me (you seriously need to lay off the cough syrup dude – Suttty)! The 200 caused me a lot of pain as when my confidence increases so does Suttty's thirst for me to crash while he has camera in hand!

Fun and games were had on this weapon as it felt fun to ride. As with the rest of the range the handlebars are new and they feel spot on. The clamps are adjustable to four different positions for personal tweaking and that folks is a good thing.

As with the 125 there's a small feeling of the motor being slightly restricted at times – although the extra horsepower helps to overcome any major difficulties. The 200 Gasser is a blast. Great fun to ride for the masses. ▶

## bike test

**With a little bit of engine work Walker reckons the 125 Gasser will really rip**



**The 200 is up for some pretty hardcore abuse**



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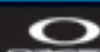
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## specifications

### EC125

<b>Capacity:</b>	124cc
<b>Bore and stroke:</b>	54mm x 54.5mm
<b>Transmission:</b>	Six-speed
<b>Carburettor:</b>	Keihin PWK
<b>Front suspension:</b>	Marzocchi 45mm (295mm travel)
<b>Rear suspension:</b>	Ohlins (310mm travel)
<b>Front brake:</b>	260mm disc
<b>Rear brake:</b>	220mm disc
<b>Wheelbase:</b>	1476mm
<b>Seat height:</b>	940mm
<b>Weight:</b>	96kg



## specifications

### EC250

<b>Capacity:</b>	249.3cc
<b>Bore and stroke:</b>	66.4mm x 72mm
<b>Transmission:</b>	Six-speed
<b>Carburettor:</b>	Keihin PWK
<b>Front suspension:</b>	Marzocchi 45mm (295mm travel)
<b>Rear suspension:</b>	Ohlins (310mm travel)
<b>Front brake:</b>	260mm disc
<b>Rear brake:</b>	220mm disc
<b>Wheelbase:</b>	1476mm
<b>Seat height:</b>	940mm
<b>Weight:</b>	102kg



The 300 stroker is the daddy of the range



## specifications

### EC200

<b>Capacity:</b>	199.4cc
<b>Bore and stroke:</b>	62.5mm x 65mm
<b>Transmission:</b>	Six-speed
<b>Carburettor:</b>	Keihin PWK
<b>Front suspension:</b>	Marzocchi 45mm (295mm travel)
<b>Rear suspension:</b>	Ohlins (310mm travel)
<b>Front brake:</b>	260mm disc
<b>Rear brake:</b>	220mm disc
<b>Wheelbase:</b>	1476mm
<b>Seat height:</b>	940mm
<b>Weight:</b>	101kg



## specifications

### EC300

<b>Capacity:</b>	294.7cc
<b>Bore and stroke:</b>	72mm x 72mm
<b>Transmission:</b>	Six-speed
<b>Carburettor:</b>	Keihin PWK
<b>Front suspension:</b>	Marzocchi 45mm (295mm travel)
<b>Rear suspension:</b>	Ohlins (310mm travel)
<b>Front brake:</b>	260mm disc
<b>Rear brake:</b>	220mm disc
<b>Wheelbase:</b>	1476mm
<b>Seat height:</b>	940mm
<b>Weight:</b>	103kg

The 250 is the one I was looking forward to riding the most to see if it was improved on the current bike. I was a little disappointed with the '05 model as it made a strange kind of power.

As with all the other Gassers the comfort zone is easily found when you first sit on the bike. A little personal adjustment on the bars and levers and you're away. On my first upshift through the gearbox I noticed something strange. Even with my size 11s I was only just able to reach the shifter. The shifter has been made longer for '06 but the one on the two-fiddy seemed like the extra long variety. Once rolling I didn't really notice the shifter as you kind of make a mental note where it is and every shift after that was made positively and with ease. The clutch and gearbox on all the Gassers work incredibly well – something you'd expect from a trials bike manufacturer.

One really interesting new addition to the bike is the switchable ignition. This switch allows you to change the ignition curve while riding. The ignition map changes to a more mellow curve for slippery going to help you find traction. The change was pretty noticeable as the test venue was real slippery in places. It was good to test this particular part of the bike in the perfect conditions to actually feel the difference it made.

The 250 chassis, again, gives the 'Gas Gas feeling'. I've come to the conclusion that all Gassers feel low up front and high in the rear. This works great for finding front wheel traction in certain situations but sometimes makes it a little difficult to find grip at the back. I personally think that for myself I would have to find a slightly better balance transfer between the front fork and rear shock by running a harder fork setting and slightly softer shock setting.

This would be a personal change and I'm sure that Gas Gas owners would have some degree of difficulty adapting to my set-up. To sum up the 250 Gasser I'd say it makes great power especially with the curve switched to the 'rain' setting. The bike and chassis feel comfortable and ready to rock and roll.

Last year's favourite bike for me was the 300 and the new version was sat on the paddock stand looking good to take the honours for a second year running. With the same tweaking as the other bikes in the range I was off and running.

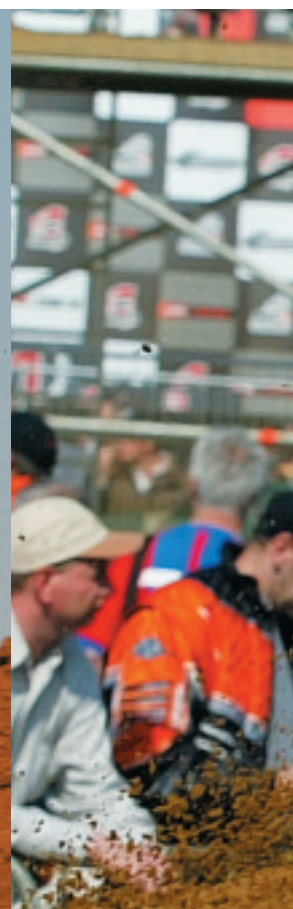
Generally I like bigger bikes and the 300 Gasser doesn't fail to impress with its smooth and very ample power delivery. This thing is a tractor and brings a big smile to my chops as it's easily ridden right through the range – tickover to over-rev. Absolutely anyone could ride – and really enjoy – this bike as the power delivery really is that smooth.

The 300 does nothing frightening which makes it a very easy bike to ride. The bike feels slightly heavier which I enjoy as it makes the shock sit a little lower and gives a slightly more balanced feeling on the chassis. This makes for a great package as you can get the best from it in all situations and conditions.

So the 300 remains the favourite for me with the 200 a very close second as it's the most fun to chuck around. But the daddy of the range takes the honours as it's a complete package and quietly goes about its business...







# MAX POWER!

**With Pit Beirer sadly paralysed and Bernd Eickenbach retired, Germany's MX hopes rest on the slender shoulders of Max Nagl...**

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

**GERMAN MOTOCROSS** could have gone into permanent decline two years ago when Pit Beirer suffered spinal injuries which left him paralysed and Bernd Eickenbach hung up his boots. But a slightly-built Bavarian school kid by the name of Max Nagl was waiting in the wings and now, two years on, has served his apprenticeship and is ready to put his country back in the GP top 10.

With three seasons of GP experience on two-strokes behind him, Max will receive full-factory support from the KTM factory as he joins the four-banger brigade. "We will get factory SX250F motors and Stefan Geurts van Kessel of the Champ team will be responsible for the engines – we already have a good working relationship as he prepped our two-strokes this year.

"My personal target is world top 10. KTM expect top eight but I would rather give myself a little leeway. There are so many good riders in MX2 and so many things can happen during a long season. You could see this year that riders with whom I am battling most weeks like Boissiere and Guarneri have even won motos – anything is possible and I want podiums, perhaps even a win."

Germany has a flourishing youth scene and Max soon stood out as one of the most promising kids on the block, taking five national titles on 80s. It could have been more but at 14 he was already racing the clock in the absence

of direct competition and moved to the adult scene at 15 – and straight into the GPs!

"I only rode a few races to test the water that summer and in 2004 I also only rode just over half the rounds – we simply couldn't afford to do the entire series and I had to miss a couple through injury – so last summer was my first full season. The target was top 15 and I was just on course until Tyla Ratray jumped me at the last round."

The first points back in 2003 had come at Teutschenthal, the sweeping roller coaster in eastern Germany which suits the sensitive throttle control of the five foot six lightweight. His first points outside his homeland came five weeks later in Bulgaria but the delight was tempered an hour later when national hero Pit Beirer suffered his career-ending crash.

The sight of the dynamic Beirer in a wheelchair is something which many found difficult at first but Max was in some ways immune – his dad Hubert was paralysed in a motocross crash over 20 years ago!

"It has never put me off because I have never known my dad any other way. He was different to the other dads but everyone is different after all. My dad is different because he sits in a wheelchair but it doesn't stop him getting on with life!"

Already national 125 champion that year and Open class title holder against international opposition in 2004, trackside fans have







Max's heroics in '05 on a two-stroke have earned him a factory thumper for '06



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looked to Max for success despite his tender years. "I know a lot is expected of me but I don't let myself be put under pressure from outside. Fortunately, the team has always been satisfied with me."

As with virtually every modern motocross gladiator, injuries have also interrupted his progress. "Both wrists, shoulder, collarbone, foot. I've got scars all over my body already. Three times it wasn't my fault, the rest were either bad luck or lack of concentration."

But an ever-present record in the 2005 GPs – one of only nine MX2 riders to achieve that feat – have proved his resolution. And only twice – Czecho and Gore Basin (where a severed ignition cable halted his top 10 progress) – did Max fail to score.

And every single one of his 194 points have been hard-fought as he conducted an almost lone battle against the 250s on his 125 two-stroke. Two factors had dictated the decision to race one more year on the 125. "First of all KTM didn't have a production 250F and it was a conscious decision to remain faithful to KTM. And, secondly, Rattray had finished second in the world on the SX125 the year before. None of us expected it to be so difficult but so many good riders had switched to four-strokes and I think we all saw as the season went on that every manufacturer had committed all of their development work to the 250 four-stroke.

"It had to be a pretty short start and I had to get a perfect jump if I was going to be even in

the first half of the field on lap one. The development in track layout has also made it more difficult with a 125. In a straight battle on a traditional track there's nothing in it between the two types of machine but the GP tracks are being made ever more demanding and with a 250 you can afford to get the jumps wrong and still make it – on a 125 your approach has to be perfect or you are struggling."

But Max also admits that a personal 'missing link' has held him back. "My fitness means I can pull back places at the end of the races but I don't force the pace enough in the early laps. I am riding on my limit but it is noticeable that most of the MX2 GP riders are riding way over theirs in the first 10 minutes. It is something in my psyche I know I have to conquer but saying is one thing, doing is another.

"I have already talked about this with my trainer Stephan Nusser and it will be one of the things we will concentrate on this winter. I have to learn to put all other thoughts to one side and be able to open the throttle wide open from the moment the gate drops. Not first look and find the lines, full gas from the word go.

"To this end we will also be working on a programme so that I am already sweating when I go to the line – if my body is not warmed up then the muscles will suffer."

Fortunately, Max overcame one mental hurdle to GP success from the word go – and that's not to be overwhelmed by the entire scene and freeze up.

"I think it must all be in the head for

**Max winds up the two-smoker in Czecho**



**Battling to get the power to the ground in Italy**







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those riders who are fast at home but cannot deliver at the GPs. It is difficult for me to be sure because I have never had this problem but I see it in others. There is probably no better example in Germany than my team-mate Markus Schiffer. At the GPs he finds it difficult to qualify – often missing out by several seconds – but in the German championship races he is just as fast as me.

“Perhaps it helped that I raced at international level regularly at youth level. When you are racing at home 30 seconds in front of everyone else you don’t appreciate how hard it will be in the adults. Every country has fast kids and when you race them you realise what you will be up against.”

The awareness of just how tough GP racing

has become has also persuaded Max not to get involved in the winter supercross scene. “I doubt I will ever contest the indoor races. Don’t get me wrong, I enjoy riding SX-style tracks but I restrict that to training. The outdoor season with 16 or 17 GPs, the Nations and eight national championship rounds is already long enough and you need a break. In every one of those races you are giving 100 per cent and have to be fit and the body needs a break.”

With world top 10 as the aim for 2006, the new German hope naturally only has one final target. “To get right to the top, to be champion not only of Germany but also the world. I have a game plan set out for the future years too but I’m keeping that to myself. Let’s just say that I am still right on schedule!”

profile



**Dad Hubert was a keen racer back in the day**



**28 NAGL Maximilian GBR**



## brit of all right!

### MAX'S UK CONNECTION

Avoiding Brits at the GPs would be pretty difficult at the best of times but Max has never had a moment's peace, what with a hairy ex-pat as the most distinguished member of the German press corp and another Brit, Mark Craig (above), as mechanic since he began GPs. “A typical Englishman. Everything has to stop at four in the afternoon during the week so that he can have his cup of hot tea, even if it's 90° in the shade. And the things he eats! I mean, pancake with Nutella and cheese! But you get used to him in the end and I have to say that I cannot point to Mark as being responsible for a single breakage in three years and that's what is most important.” “What do you mean, strange eating habits?” retorts Mark after emptying his mouth. “What's wrong with Nutella and Philadelphia?” Now we see what you mean Max...





*Above: Roger Harvey skips downhill across the Piddingworth ridge*



*Right: Geoff Mayes flies his Maico to a first race third*



# BRIGHTON BELLE

**After DEFRA sounded the death knell for racing at Piddingworth, Uncle Jack looks back to the track's '70s scrambling heyday...**

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

**FOR ALMOST** 40 years Brighton and District Motorcycle Club organised major motocross meetings at Piddingworth on the picturesque South Downs.

During the seventies they even reached the dizzy heights of the British Open Championship. But recently the 'Brighton Scramble' (as it was originally known) lost its traditional venue after running annually since September 1965 when the inaugural event materialised in conjunction with a motorcycle show at Brighton's Hotel Metropole!

Courtesy of farmers Albert and David West, this early Autumn date remained on the club's calendar until this year when the farm was designated an 'environmentally sensitive area' by the grandly entitled 'Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (aka DEFRA!). Thundering four-stroke motorcycles maxing out at 10,000rpm don't suit sensitive ears so the 80 acres that constituted the Piddingworth circuit are, in their racing guise, no more.

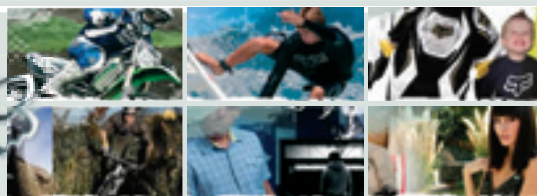
Open-to-centre events rapidly blossomed

into a late-season national. Visiting factory folk heroes like Jeff Smith and Arthur Lampkin were invited to compete as guest members of the Brighton club. Then in 1977 Piddingworth landed its first British Open title round.

The Open championship returned two years later and welcomed Honda's newly-crowned (and first ever!) world champion, Graham Noyce, just a week after the Hampshireman had led Great Britain to a thrilling second place in the 1979 Motocross des Nations at Ruskeasanta in Finland. ▀







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**MXdN team member  
Vaughan Semmens  
leads Harvey**



**Rob Hooper rips to  
the front in race one**



Freshly back from Finland, I treated a mad bunch of London mates to a sumptuous September day in Sussex. After queuing on the notorious A23 they sampled a simply dazzling day of blazing sunshine and blistering, dusty action featuring that wicked cast list of megastars who contested the British Open Championship back then.

Already also enthroned as British Open champ for a fourth successive season, 'Rolls' Noyce encountered some unexpectedly stern opposition that sublime Sunday on the South Downs from a lean, mean Midlander on a Maico!

Rob Hooper, now manager of the Maximum Solutions Hooper Suzuki team, had recovered superhumanly from breaking his back at the 1978 Trophee des Nations 12 months earlier and – alongside Noyce, Neil Hudson and Vaughan Semmens – been a member of that heroic MX des Nations squad in Finland. British championship motos were savage 40-minute plus two lap epics back then and I vividly recall Hoop – two days short of his 25th birthday – and Noycey locked together in a riveting first-race fight for the lead, swapping positions constantly ahead of Maico quartet Hudson (250 world title runner-up), Geoff Mayes, Roger Harvey and Semmens.

Then the Honda, amazingly, broke down! "Rob should win this race now," quoth the blond, blue-eyed world champion as he leaned wryly against his stricken factory 500.

But Hooper didn't – and still knows he should have done! "I remember I was a bloody idiot," Rob still grins ruefully. "All race Badger Goss (the Maico boss) kept tapping his head at me and I kept thinking 'why's he doing that'. Then Graham stopped and I stalled it, didn't I!

"I'd arrived on a high after Finland as well. I restarted and finished second behind Neil with Geoffrey third. And they were flying second race. I think Graham retired again and I was so disappointed not to win after the first one. 'Nellie' won it with Geoff second and me third."

Rob rated Piddingworth highly. "It was a rider's track, not a flat-out blind," he explains. "Looking at it, you could mistakenly think it was no more than a grass track. No big hills. Just a step in the middle that we jumped up and down. But it was actually much more than that. Like Farleigh Castle, the ground dug up and got very bumpy in the corners. It was a real challenge."

Hoop thinks he first visited in 1973, having just tied up the Shell Under-21 national

championship on a Doug Wheeler AJS as he turned 19. "There were always good open-to-centre meetings in the Midlands, Cheshire and the North West," adds Hooper. "We didn't need to venture south of London except for those TV scrambles at Lydden Hill," he chuckles. "But Brighton actually offered start money to go so it was well worth the journey down – 15 quid, I think, which was more than my weekly wage at the time driving for a computer company in Rugeley! And for someone like me it meant coming up against guys like Malcolm Dearne and Ivan Miller who we didn't normally race with.

"Also, they used to have one of those £100 races which were popular at the time. Always in the middle of September, called something like the Sussex Grand National. I remember it in 1976 on a Maico. All year Maico had trouble breaking back wheels so we'd had one made by a specialist wheel builder. It shattered jumping across the ridge when I was leading that £100 race!"

Hoop's old habits die hard. On September 18th – 26 years and two days since losing that galling battle with Graham Noyce – he celebrated his 51st birthday in a vets race at Hawkstone Park, riding protégé Lewis Gregory's practice bike. Rob won the first race (that's progress, then!) and was leading the second until he bailed off in the bombhole on his final lap, remounting to finish second!



**Jimmy Aird keeps  
everything crossed on  
the factory CCM**





# KING KIW!

**Coppins goes 1-1 to retain his British MX1 crown as the domestic series goes down to the wire at Matchams**

Words by Suffy Photos by Ray Chuss

**AFTER STORMS** dampen the going at both Landrake and Whitby the sun's finally shining for the eighth and final round of the Maxxis British motocross championship at Matchams Park.

Ironically, the circuit that sits right on the Hampshire/Dorset border is probably the track that's more suited for running in wet conditions than any of the season's others – oh well!

With just eight points separating MX1's top three championship challengers as they come into Matchams you just know it's gonna be a barnstormer with the only certainty being that the title's going the way of a Honda rider. It's defending champ Josh Coppins who heads the hunt for CAS but both Multitek's Paul Cooper and RWJ's James Noble are in with a shout and hungry for success.

But against all odds it's Yamaha's Martin Barr who's got his bars in front as the pack leave turn one and head off along that stupendously rough, long right-hander that kicks off the Matchams lap.

And the young Irishman still leads at the end of lap one before Coppins and Coops blast by and Barr bins it, slipping back to 15th or so. Noble, Jordan Rose and Neville 'the Beast from the South East' Bradshaw all move up a position thanks to Martin's mistake – although Bradshaw doesn't stay there too long as his spluttering Suzuki finally packs up right around the 15-minute mark.

At the front Coops is losing time to Coppins who's cruising to his ninth Maxxis moto win on the trot. Paul hangs on to second with Whitby boys Noble and Rose filling the front four while Barr battles back to fifth and first non-red rider home.

Moto two is almost Coppins all the way. Josh yanks the holeshoot and pulls out a small gap before making a big mistake on lap three which allows Cooper by for a while. But it doesn't take JC long to recover his composure and within a lap he's back out front and putting down lap times that are over three seconds faster than everybody bar Coops and Noble.

But despite being one of the quickest riders on the track Noble's already blown it. He hits the startgate and then has a quick lie-down in turn one before getting back up and lighting the wick on his rocket-powered CRF450. Moving from last to 20th on lap one, James takes eight more scalps on the second tour and five further in the next 20 minutes to grab seventh by the end – one spot behind Lithuanian Essex boy Arunas Gelazninkas who's enjoying the rough sandy going on his TP Motorcycles-sponsored Honda.

The top five are led home by the new champ who also happens to be the old champ – long live the champ we say! Coops holds on for the runner-up spot in the race and the final series standings while Yoshi Atsuta grabs the final podium spot in his farewell Maxxis ride for Motovision Suzuki. Atsuta's team-mate Bradshaw is next and Gordon Crockard takes fifth on the Dixon Yamaha.

While Steve Dixon's MX1 boys can only grab a fifth apiece their team-mate Billy MacKenzie romps home to a pair of outstanding wins in the MX2 division. But Billy doesn't have it all his own way...

Champ KTM's recently crowned British champ Carl Nunn launches from the startgate to an early race lead in moto one but Billy's right with him and so are Jason Dougan, Gareth Swanepoel, Wayne Smith and lightning-fast schoolboy-sensation Elliot Banks-Browne who are all chasing hard on the ever-roughening 1,500 metre circuit.

On lap five Billy makes a move to take ►





*Paul Cooper sees his title dreams dashed at the final round*







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## ► James Noble

### MX1 MATCHAMS 3-7

"I was looking forward to the event as there were only eight points difference between myself, Josh and Paul. I had a good start in race one and was battling with Paul for most of the race but got stuck behind backmarkers and finished in third. That meant I had to beat Paul in the second race to finish second overall for the championship.

"Unfortunately, I went too soon and hit the gate. I was in last place but kept going. I finished seventh in the race and third in the championship which I'm disappointed with but I'll work hard over the winter to get onto Josh's pace for 2006."

## Billy MacKenzie

### MX2 MATCHAMS 1-1

"It was good to finish the year this way with a strong double win and without any injury. I think I ended up equalling Carl when it comes to race victories but I'm disappointed not to have won the championship.

"I felt good on the track today and had to make some decent moves to take the lead in both motos. It was really rough but the suspension was working perfectly. It was nice to ride like that in front of everyone who has supported me this season."



## Wayne Smith

### MX2 MATCHAMS 6-DNF

"In the first race I just wanted to get my points and secure third place in the championship, then in the second race I was sixth or seventh and the head gasket went. All in all the season has been good really. I'm third which is where I wanted to be and it's my best ever result in the British championship so I'm over the moon with that."

the lead and immediately pulls a small gap on Nunn who seems to be coming under increasing pressure from Doogs who's having his best domestic ride since finishing second at Landrake. Swanny's still holding on to fourth while his Molson team-mate Tommy Searle scythes his way to fifth from way outside the top 10.

The top five hold their positions right to the death and the only real on-track battle is over 11th as Honda riders Ben Saunders, Jake Nicholls and Danny Smyth fight it out in a private battle behind CAS team-manager Neil Prince who's enjoying a rare ride out to finish the race in 10th.

Moto two starts pretty much the same as the first as Nunny lays down the awesome power of the factory SXF to take the lead. Swanny runs second early on until Billy Mac piles on plenty of pressure and does both Gareth and Carl in quick succession. From

there on he's gone, Nunny settles in second and Swanny stays safe in third.

Fourth place is a totally different matter. Brad Anderson holds the position early doors until Searle blazes by then bins it allowing Ando back through. But Doogs also fancies a crack at fourth and forces his way past Bradley to hold down the position until Tommy once more comes hauling past.

And that's the way things end – MacKenzie's the deserved winner followed by Nunny, Swanny, Searley, Doogie, Ando and KRM's Scott Probert who ends up right back where he started in seventh.

The final series standings see Innovate Honda's Wayne Smith – who's had a nightmare day by his standards to go 6-dnf – finally leapfrog the injured Tom Church to end the year in third behind MacKenzie and Nunn while Searle slips past Ando for fifth in his rookie season.



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## Yoshitaka Atsuta

### MX1 MATCHAMS 8-3

"I had a good start in the first moto but crashed pretty hard in the first corner after I hit a rider who was already going down. I rode well after that and was happy to come back to that position. In the second race I got through okay and found the rhythm and speed that I had earlier in the day – it was nice to finish with a podium.

"I will go back to Japan next season although I hope to return for the British Grand Prix and will also be doing the Japanese round of the world championship."

## Martin Barr

### MX1 MATCHAMS 5-8

"I was really looking forward to the first race and felt confident. I took the holeshot and led for a lap then I went back to third and dropped it which put me way down in 15th. I managed to pull back through to fifth which again was my best race result of the season.

"I just couldn't wait to get back on my bike for the second race. I made a mistake on the second corner and the front wheel washed out – I went down and was way back in 25th place. I knew I had a lot of work to do and eventually got back to finish eighth. I've progressed every round and I'm real happy."

## results – round eight

### MX1

1	Josh Coppins	(CAS Honda)	30+30=60
2	Paul Cooper	(Multitek Honda)	27+27=54
3	Yoshi Atsuta	(Motovision Suzuki)	17+25=42
4	James Noble	(RWJ Honda)	25+17=42
5	Martin Barr	(Bike it Dixon Yamaha)	21+15=36
6	Gordon Crockard	(Bike it Dixon Yamaha)	10+23=33
7	Arunas Gelazninkas	(TP Honda)	8+19=27
8	Jordan Rose	(Meredith Honda)	23+4=27
9	Mark Eastwood	(Wiseco Honda)	15+11=26
10	Bryan MacKenzie	(Twisted 7 Kawasaki)	9+13=22

### MX2

1	Billy MacKenzie	(Bike It Dixon Yamaha)	30+30=60
2	Carl Nunn	(Champ KTM)	27+27=54
3	Gareth Swanepoel	(Molson Kawasaki)	23+25=48
4	Jason Dougan	(Motovision Suzuki)	25+21=46
5	Tommy Searle	(Molson Kawasaki)	21+23=44
6	Brad Anderson	(O'Neal Yamaha)	15+19=34
7	Lewis Gregory	(Hooper Suzuki)	17+13=30
8	Elliot Banks-Browne	(RWJ Honda)	13+11=24
9	Scott Probert	(KRM Honda)	6+17=23
10	Wayne Smith	(Innovate Honda)	19+0=19

### FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

### MX1

1 Coppins 414 points, 2 Cooper 400, 3 Noble 393, 4 Atsuta 336, 5 Vehvilainen 246, 6 Bradshaw 240, 7 Jones 233, 8 Phillips 184, 9 Hucklebridge 144, 10 Rose 143

### MX2

1 Nunn 444 points, 2 MacKenzie 370, 3 Smith 305, 4 Church 292, 5 Searle 265, 6 Anderson 261, 7 Dougan 199, 8 Eggens 184, 9 Gregory 172, 10 Swanepoel 171

## Josh Coppins

### MX1 MATCHAMS 1-1

"I was a little bit disappointed not to have taken pole position but Paul was on fire in qualification. I had good starts for the motos – I was second in the first race and then had the lead out of the gate in the second. I've been trying to improve on my riding and I was happy with my first moto performance, I didn't let up and kept pushing. I made a big mistake halfway through the second race because the sun was quite low and getting all the jumps right was difficult but I regained my composure and pulled out a big lead to win by the end. Winning 10 motos in a row is a record for me, when I came back from injury I wanted to win them all and I knew it would be possible but I didn't have a good day at Lyng – thankfully since then there's been a gradual improvement."

## Carl Nunn

### MX2 MATCHAMS 2-2

"In qualifying I was a bit disappointed as I couldn't get a clear lap in but the start at Matchams is pretty fair so I didn't worry too much.

"I took the holeshot in race one and I led for a few laps until Billy came by. Gareth was pushing hard for a while but we broke him and pulled away. With three laps to go I caught Billy up which I was surprised about but unfortunately I got caught by a backmarker which held me up so I settled for second."







# CLEAN SWEEP!

**Knighter wraps up his first ever world enduro title and KTM team-mates Ivan Cervantes and Samuli Aro are also crowned to make it a very special weekend for the Austrian manufacturer**

Words and photos by Jonty Edmunds

**DAVID KNIGHT** lifts his first world enduro championship title at the penultimate round of the '05 WEC series in Greece before finishing off his near perfect season in style by placing as the fastest rider on both days of the final round in Italy.

The dominant rider in the E3 class this season, Knight wins both days in Greece to secure his Enduro 3 crown in the best possible way. Finishing close to one minute ahead of his nearest rival on day one, David then finishes 48 seconds clear on day two. Stopping close to the end of the final test of the event to wave to the

enthusiastic Greek spectators, Knight is then mobbed by his KTM team as he exits the test.

"Winning a world title is something I've wanted to do ever since I was a child," explains Knight. "I knew that if I rode like I have at all the other rounds of the series I would win the title here and that is exactly what I've done. It feels great to have won the world title."

With Knighter winning on both days it's his KTM team-mate Marko Tarkkala who finishes twice runner up in the E3 class with the final rostrum position being split between French Gas Gas rider Seb Guillaume on day one and

Spaniard Xevi Galindo on day two.

Under no pressure to perform at the final round of the series, Knight is again the fastest rider in the E3 class and the event on day one. But instead of his name being at the top of the results the Manxman finds himself down in 16th position after a mix up at the penultimate checkpoint of the day.

Riding as the first competitor in the event – and with the staff manning the pre-finish check not ready for his arrival – Knight and Tarkkala ride through the check early and are penalised. Later told that the club might have been at fault,



**There's no stopping DK who seals his first world title in Greece after an awesome season**

## final standings

### ENDURO 1

1 Ivan Cervantes (KTM) 432 points, 2 Marc Germain (Yamaha) 344, 3 Alessandro Belometti (KTM) 334, 4 Simone Albergoni (Honda) 325, 5 Bartosz Oblucki (Yamaha) 248, 6 Paul Edmondson (Honda) 218, 7 Maurizio Micheluz (Yamaha) 195, 8 Petteri Silvan (KTM) 187, 9 Richard Larsson (TM) 170, 10 Danielle Tellini (Yamaha) 125... 43 Edward Jones (KTM) 11... 51 Tim Lewis (TM) 8

### ENDURO 2

1 Samuli Aro (KTM) 403 points, 2 Stefan Merriman (Yamaha) 341, 3 Alessandro Botturi (KTM) 297, 4 Fabien Planet (KTM) 272, 5 Bjorne Carlsson (Husaberg) 263, 6 Valtteri Salonen (Honda) 220, 7 Anders Eriksson (Husqvarna) 203, 8 Andrea Beconi (Yamaha) 200, 9 Jari Mattila (Beta) 181, 10 Euan McConnell (Suzuki)

### ENDURO 3

1 David Knight (KTM) 427 points, 2 Marko Tarkkala (KTM) 357, 3 Seb Guillaume (Gas Gas) 325, 4 Mika Ahola (Honda) 302, 5 Alessandro Zanni (Honda) 285, 6 Xevi Galindo (KTM) 277, 7 Alessio Paoli (TM) 240, 8 Vita Kuklik (KTM) 193, 9 Thierry Klutz (Gas Gas) 172, 10 Mario Rinaldi (Husaberg) 161

### ENDURO JUNIOR

1 Cristobal Guerrero (Gas Gas) 290 points, 2 Jake Stapleton (TM) 269, 3 Daryl Bolter (Husqvarna) 255, 4 Oriol Mena (Gas Gas) 228, 5 Marc Bourgeois (Husqvarna) 227, 6 Paolo Bernardi (Honda) 213, 7 Julien Dubac (Husqvarna) 172, 8 Si Wakely (Honda) 142, 9 Lucas Puerta (KTM) 114, 10 Juraj Dozsa (KTM) 110

DK's also told that an appeal to the FIM will be required to overturn the official results and see him awarded the win.

So despite having been the two fastest riders in the class Knight and Tarkkala place down in 16th and 17th position while Frenchman Seb Guillaume is awarded the win flanked by Mika Ahola and Alessio Paoli.

On day two Knight makes sure everyone knows that he's the fastest by topping the E3 class by over one minute ahead of Ahola and Guillaume. Ending the WEC series in the same way he started it – as the fastest rider in the

event – David and Tarkkala ensure a KTM one-two at the top of the E3 championship standings with Gas Gas-mounted Guillaume finishing third.

Spaniard Ivan Cervantes finishes the '05 WEC season as the first senior class rider to win a world championship when he tops the Enduro 1 class on day one in Greece. Finishing ahead of Yamaha rider Bartosz Oblucki and his team-mate Alessandro Belometti, Cervantes becomes Spain's first ever world enduro champ.

"It's an amazing feeling knowing that I am

the first ever Spaniard to win a WEC title," admits Ivan. "It has been such a great season for me. Riding in a different class to last year on a new bike and winning so many races is incredible."

Half-a-minute in front of Oblucki on day one, with his world title secure Cervantes then ups his pace on day two and places over one minute ahead of Belometti. Claiming the third place spot, having swapped finishing positions with Belometti, is Oblucki who's just six seconds adrift.

In Italy Ivan decides to have a little fun



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and instead of competing on his 250cc four-stroke opts to race a 125cc two-stroke. With little time spent on the bike prior to the race Ivan isn't quite as quick as he normally is and finishes third on both days.

At the head of the class Italian riders Alessandro Belometti and Simone Albergoni battle it out for the win with each rider taking a day each. In winning day one Belometti claims his first WEC victory while by topping day two Albergoni takes his first win of the season.

On day one French Yamaha rider Marc Germain squeezes between KTM riders Belometti and Cervantes and in doing so secures the runner-up position in the E1 championship. And by finishing second on day two Belometti ensures that he finishes third in the E1 series.

With Finn Samuli Aro needing to finish with fourth and fifth places to ensure he claims the '05 Enduro 2 world championship, the KTM factory rider has no intention of trying to top the class in Greece – and he doesn't.

UFO Corse Yamaha rider Stefan Merriman is the rider that does that as the '04 Enduro 1 world champion wins both days but can do nothing to stop Samuli claiming his world title.

Finishing as runner-up to Merriman on both days, Aro claims world title number three having finished ahead of countryman Valtteri Salonen on day one and Italian Alessandro Botturi on

day two after putting in a pair of solid – if unspectacular – performances. Still, hanging it out was never an option with the FIM gold medal so nearly in his grasp!

"I knew that Stefan would be pushing to win but I just wanted to claim my world title," admits Aro after the race. "With Stefan, Fabien Planet and Anders Eriksson all getting injured I have been worried that I might be next. I'm pleased I didn't and I'm relieved to have won. I wasn't the fastest rider in the E2 class this year – Stefan was – but I was the best."

At the final round of the series Samuli gets to finish his world championship season in the perfect way – by winning the last day of the series. Placing behind Merriman on day one, the Finn then ups his speed on day two to win comfortably. Finishing third and claiming his best result of the season is Swede Bjorne Carlsson while Botturi places third in the E2 championship behind Aro and Merriman.

Scot Euan McConnell competes in the final two rounds of the WEC series aboard a Valenti Suzuki after being released from his Honda deal shortly after the Slovakian ISDE. Finishing in ninth and seventh in Greece, McConnell then fails to finish day one in Italy after his front wheel spindle breaks and then drops 11 minutes on day two following a problem with his front brake. Despite his problems he rounds out the year in 10th in the E2 class.

With the Enduro Junior world championship title having already been claimed by Spaniard Cristobal Guerrero at round seven of the series, the final two rounds see Australian TM rider Jake Stapleton and Husqvarna-mounted Brit Daryl Bolter battle it out for the runner-up spot. And on day one in Greece just one second separates the pair.

Both needing to beat each other to claim the runner-up spot, Bolter comes close to winning on day one in Greece as he leads Stapleton by the smallest of margins prior to the final test of the day. But with Jake putting in a near flawless ride the Aussie rider claims his first victory of the season.

On day two Jake finds victory a little easier to come by and helped by a big crash from Bolter tops the day by close to a healthy one-and-a-half minutes.

Knowing that he needs to win on both days to stand any chance of placing second in the championship, Bolter tries too hard on day one in Italy and finishes a distant third behind Italian Paolo Bernardi and Jake.

On day two Jake is the dominant rider in the class and comfortably out-paces Bernardi and Bolter to secure the runner-up spot in the EJ championship. Finishing just 14 points behind in the series, Bolter claims third and finishes his first full WEC season as the highest placed 125cc rider.



Daryl Bolter just loses out on second in the Junior category



Euan McConnell ends the year in the E2 top 10

## who's the man?

KNIGHTER'S ALMOST PERFECT SEASON...

In winning his first ever WEC title, Manx ace David Knighter stamps his mark on the international enduro scene in no uncertain terms. The fastest rider in the Enduro 3 class on all but one of the 18 days of the nine-round championship, Knighter's speed and consistency also see him finish as the fastest overall competitor in more WEC events than not.

Competing in his first season as a factory-backed KTM rider, Knight's signing with the KTM Enduro Factory Team Farioli squad at the end of '04 meant that for '05 he was armed with the machinery and back-up to fulfil his childhood dream of becoming a world champion.

After winning numerous indoor and extreme events – as well as the opening rounds of the British and Italian national championships – come the opening round of the world championship few expected David to do anything other than win.

What few were expecting was for him to be as dominant as he was. "The way the WEC started for me in Spain was perfect," admits Knighter, looking back to the season opener. "It was wet which suited me and everything went well. I wasn't expecting to win by as much as I did but I knew then that I could win the world championship. When I won in Portugal the following weekend where it was dry I knew that it would be hard for the other E3 class riders to beat me."

But David did get beaten during the '05 WEC series – in Finland on day 13 of the championship by his team-mate Marko Tarkkala. "I knew that if Marko was going to beat me anywhere this season it was going to be at his home race in Finland. To be honest I wasn't too bothered that he beat me because it took a little pressure off me. "I knew he would be fast, tried a little too hard and made a few mistakes. I settled down on day two and beat him and have been the fastest rider at each of the rounds since then. It would have been nice to have won every day but winning the championship is the important thing."

As well as his world championship success David also produced an incredible performance at the ISDE in Slovakia. Topping the E3 class and finishing as the fastest individual performer in the competition, David became the first British rider to top the event and ensured that in '05 he was the fastest enduro rider in the world. Competing in the same class aboard the same bike and for the same team in '06, David will start next season's WEC series as the rider to beat.





# BIG BROTHER!

**Round one goes to Mikey as little brother Jeff and almost 6,000 voyeurs watch the elder Alessi run riot at Future West's SX season opener**

Words and photos by Sutti

**FUTURE WEST** pull out all the stops as their Wulfsport-sponsored British supercross series heads home to its perennial starting point in Sheffield. This is the ninth successive year that

the Hallam FM Arena staff have opened its doors and welcomed Canadian promoter John Hellam and his crew into the ice hockey rink-sized arena.

A talented line-up of 125 Pro class runners features no less than five North Americans with the USA's Alessi brothers starting out as favourites over the crash-happy Canucks – Colton Facciotti and Kyle Beaton – who've brought their much safer riding veteran compatriot Marco Dube with them.

And the talent pool doesn't run dry there! South African Neville Bradshaw – who's running

both classes on the Motovision Suzuki – is also thrown into the mix with last year's runner-up Stuart Flockhart and a whole host of hungry youngsters who are keen to make a name for themselves on the tight 30-second-lap course.

The Open Pro class also has a couple of familiar names in there including ex AMA supercross winner Mike Craig and Yorkshire's off-road all-rounder Ryan Voase who'll both be going up against the hardcore Canadians who are running both classes on their 250cc four-poppers.

After the fantastic opening ceremonies



*Mike Alessi's the class act at Sheffield and takes a clear win in the Pro 125s*





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which see some dodgy dancing from the not so fantastic Sheffield Steelerettes it's time for the real action to begin with 125cc heat one.

Jeff Alessi hits the front in turn one while Facciotti chases hard with local lad Carl Brogden running third until Dube makes a move into the final qualifying position.

Heat two is another start to finish display of dominance by an Alessi. This time it's Mikey who secures the deal ahead of Bradshaw while Brad Turner beats off Danny Tollet to transfer directly to the main.

The two 125 LCQs see Beaton, Wayne Garrett and Patrick Gilboy go through from the first while Disco Flock, Carl Brogden and brand-new Wulfsport Honda signing Scott Probert go through from the second to fill each and every gate for the 12-man 125 Main Event.

The Open class heats see a little more in the way of racing. Mike Craig yanks the holeshot in heat one with Beaton – who's debuting the ally-framed zero-six YZF – and Alex Rach right there as they blast down the first rhythm section. Meanwhile, Bradshaw's struggled out of the gate and he's got work to do if he's gonna qualify directly to the final.

As Beaton moves past Stingray and into the lead on lap three Nev makes a pass on Rach before chasing down the veteran Californian. Craig seems to crack under the pressure and as they head into lapped traffic gets a little desperate, nailing Eamon Bourke hard enough to put the Suzuki rider out of the race. Bradshaw sees his chance and moves through to seal second as the chequers fly – awesome stuff from Nevster!

While heat one is a good 'un, heat two has to be the race of the early evening. It's a pair of 250 two-strokes out front as Glen Phillips gets out of the gate first on the Yamaha but he's got LPE Kawasaki's Ryan Voase for company and Voasey doesn't waste any time in sticking it to the Welshman.

The pair scrap it out between themselves for four laps until Facciotti and Dube catch them up and then all hell breaks loose in the left-hander after the whoops – Voase comes out with the lead while Glen's back in fourth behind both maple munchers.

Voasey can't stop the Canadian onslaught either as first Facciotti and then Dube move in front while Ryan wheezes his way to third.

"I had the speed but I got so tired," reckons Ryan who recently wrapped up the UKXC series. "I think I'm used to being able to settle in to the races but tonight I struggled with going at 100 per cent right from the off."

The Open class LCQs are action-packed affairs too and Phillips, Rach, Brogden, Turner, Danny Tollet and Richard-Mike Jones all book their way into the final but first up is the 15-lap 125 Main.

As the gate drops and the pack head into turn one it's Mike Alessi who's bar-to-bar with Dube and Beaton as the Canadians try to push around the outside of the 17-year-old. But as the pack leaves the 90° left-hander the running order is Alessis one and two as Mike's kid brother Jeff smartly cuts inside the bunched up pack and comes out of the turn right on the rear fender of his elder sibling.

Both Bradshaw and Facciotti are buried midpack and battling forwards – taking an occasional swipe at each other in the process, although Colton's blatant take-out move is a little bit harsh next to Bradshaw's much friendlier little tap.

While Mikey and Jeff are running out

**Ryan Voase is a seasoned SX rider but too many UKXC events may have dulled his killer instinct**

**Rising US star Jeff Alessi follows big brother Mikey home in second in the Pro 125cc division**



**Neville Bradshaw bangs bars for most of the night with Colton Facciotti**





## results

### 125 PRO

- 1 Mike Alessi (Red Bull KTM)
- 2 Jeff Alessi (Red Bull KTM)
- 3 Colton Facciotti (Kawasaki)
- 4 Marco Dube (KTM)
- 5 Kyle Beaton (Yamaha)
- 6 Neville Bradshaw (Motovision Suzuki)
- 7 Stuart Flockhart (Flockhartmx.com Honda)
- 8 Bradley Turner (Atlantic Promotions KTM)
- 9 Scott Probert (Wulfsport Honda)
- 10 Carl Brogden (Silvester Yamaha)

### OPEN PRO

- 1 Colton Facciotti (Kawasaki)
- 2 Neville Bradshaw (Motovision Suzuki)
- 3 Marco Dube (KTM)
- 4 Kyle Beaton (Yamaha)
- 5 Glen Phillips (Pioneer Yamaha)
- 6 Ryan Voase (LPE Team Green Kawasaki)
- 7 Bradley Turner (Atlantic Promotions KTM)
- 8 Alex Rach (Innovate Honda)
- 9 Mike Craig (MXW Honda)
- 10 Carl Brogden (Silvester Yamaha)

### 125 AMATEUR

- 1 Chris Bastik (Motoland Honda)
- 2 Daniel Matherson (Honda)
- 3 Ryan Mason (Yamaha)
- 4 Martin Downer (Motox.tv Honda)
- 5 Joe Pike (Honda)

### OPEN AMATEUR

- 1 Danny Blakely (Yamaha)
- 2 Oliver Brunskill (Silvester Yamaha)
- 3 Clemmy Mossop (Honda)
- 4 Dominic Blood (Honda)
- 5 Oliver Kemp (Honda)

Colton Facciotti bangs bars for most of the night with Neville Bradshaw



Alex Rach takes eighth in the Open Pro class



Glen Phillips does Embo proud with a fighting fifth in the Open Pros



front Beaton's beginning to fade as he drops from third to fifth. "I rode real tight in the beginning and got a little arm-pump. It's real tight in here and everyone's running at the same speed so it's hard to make up time once you've lost it."

Dube's running fourth on the KTM and Facciotti's third. "I just kept focussed and worked on making no mistakes," claims Colton later and if the Canadian keeps on keeping on the runner-up spot place is a possibility as Jeff seems to be slowing up.

"Round about the seventh or eighth lap my shoulder started getting a little tired and started hurting real bad," reckons the younger Alessi. "I just tried to put my head down and concentrate. Facciotti was riding real good but even after I backed off I had a three or four-second lead over him at the finish."

There's no slowing Mike though and even some semi-scary moments riding through the lappers don't phase the pint-sized AMA pro national winner who secures first place.

While you could have almost guaranteed that one of the Alessis would win the 125 class the Open Main is still wide open as the 30-second board is turned to five and the 12 riders eye the startgate. When it drops it's Rach who's got his wheel ahead of Facciotti as they charge into turn one but Colton's got the inside and forces through to first in the corner.

Bradshaw starts third but by the end of the whoops he's right on the tail end of Colton's Kawasaki and they hit the big double side by side with less than a foot between them as they sail through the fume-filled air. With Nev on the inside for the next turn it's pretty much a given who'll come out with the lead.

Beaton, Dube, Voase and Phillips all chase hard as Facciotti once again hits Bradshaw hard enough to make the South African bobble. While Nev's regaining his balance Beaton blasts by for second but Nev bites back as Beaton bites down on some British soil which allows Dube to slip by for third. And that's how it stays to the flag – Facciotti wins it ahead of Bradshaw, Dube and Beaton with Phillips first Brit in fifth just ahead of Voase and Rach.





# GUNNING FOR GLORY, MX2 2007 >>

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## FUTUREZEST!

BRITISH SUPERCROSS  
SEASON KICKS OFF  
IN SHEFFIELD

## PROSHOW

BYMX BAGS THE  
BIG BOYS FOR '06





# FUTUREZEST!

## THE YOUNG GUNS COME OUT FIGHTING AS THE SX SEASON KICKS OFF AT SHEFFIELD

**T**he 2005/6 domestic supercross season kicks off with the Wulfsport Future West British championship held at its regular opening venue – Sheffield Arena.

Sheffield is a great venue to start the series at. Good crowds are always on hand to cheer the nippers along and this year is no exception with nearly 6,000 appreciative fans doing just that. And there's a great turn-out from the youth stars – in fact, according to Future West it's their biggest number of youth entries to date.

The track's laid out slightly different this year with four lanes instead of six which makes for closer racing in some groups. Unfortunately, some of the current SX champions stay away and for me the competitiveness isn't quite there in some groups. But, saying that, all the riders put on a great display of SX racing.

Like last year the Autos have the crowd in awe, showing that even the smallest of riders can entertain and show some amazing skills at such a young age. Ben Watson is the rider to beat and he takes a wonderful first round victory, making him the early favourite for the crown. Scooter Webster tries his best to catch Ben but has to settle for second at the chequered flag. Having spoken to his parents after the race, third-placed Max Acres is

overjoyed to finish on the podium with the likes of Ben and Scooter.

The 65cc class has a few twist and turns. James Dunn – the recently crowned Weston Beach Race winner – has found amazing form at the end of the season and wins in fine style. Ben Halfpenny, who I've never seen race before, impresses me a lot on his way to second and will definitely be a nipper to watch in the future. Hard-charging Luke Norris, the Kawasaki-backed rider, ends the evening in third.

Luke Dean suffers some more bad luck. The young hotshot goes down early in the race and just can't catch the flying threesome ahead of him.

After watching the qualifying rounds all day I reckoned the small-wheeled class was wide open. Max Anstie, Jack Rowe and Lewis Trickett are the prominent players in the field but come race night there's only one rider in it – mighty Max who destroys the opposition with his cool head and impressive speed.

Rowe suffers a nasty fall on the rhythm section and is down for far too long which puts paid to a top three finish. Trickett grits his teeth and comes home in second just ahead of Christian Taylor. Hopefully in Cardiff these two riders will be a lot closer to Max which will make for good racing.

The group that lacks the most depth in my opinion are the guys in the big-wheeled 85cc



*Luke Dean's still smiling despite a run of bad luck*



*Michael Eccles goes wild out of the gate*



class. American rider Kristian Craig is quick enough to blitz the field to take the win but, to be perfectly honest, our top supercross riders are absent. Will Worden digs deep to finish second. Prior to the race he said on an internet forum that he was going for a win and fair play to him – he didn't let anyone down and produced a good performance. Pioneer Yamaha's Daniel Arnold looks uncomfortable on a supercross track – certainly not his normal barnstorming self – but he still manages to finish third and will definitely improve as the supercross season progresses.

The strangest decision of the night is that the youth riders are not allowed to jump the big double – safety issues are the concern – but how come certain youth riders take part in the Pro races and do the jump with no problem at all but when racing in the youths they can't?

One rider who could jump the double with ease is 125cc winner Ashley Greedy. Ashley battles with James Dodd for the first few laps but then steps it up and strolls home for a very impressive win. Doddy does his best but just can't match the classy style of the young Welshman. Daniel Matherson is another rider who's new to me and shows great potential in finishing third ahead of seasoned supercross veteran Luke Remmer.

All in all a good opener despite quite a few names missing. Let's hope come Cardiff a few more top UK riders are present.

**Ashley Greedy can't jump the double – although he can! Confused? Us too...**



**Main: Ben Watson Meek brings his KTM in to land  
Left: Max Anstie tops the SW85cc podium**



# PROSHOW!

**N**ext season is looking unbelievable in the youth ranks and it's great to see Pro teams entering the competitive schoolboy championship events with both Yamaha and Honda represented.

Pioneer Yamaha have Luke Remmer, the talented 125cc rider, trying to win a title after stepping up from the big-wheeled class. Daniel Arnold will try to emulate his win in the British Masters series on the new big-wheeled machine and Jack Rowe will definitely be one

to watch in the small-wheeled class.

PAR Homes/KRM Honda Racing will have world champion Steven Clarke on the 250F while on their big-wheeled machines they have Scott Elderfield and Mel Pocock. Finishing off an outstanding group of riders will be Luke Hawkins in the small-wheeled class and as their satellite rider Aaron Smith on a 125.

So it looks like the BYMX pits will be full of big rigs which will be amazing to see and hopefully take our sport to the next level.

# SXSERIES

**Y**ou lucky riders who like your supercross are in for a real treat starting on November 26! That's when RHL Activities Ltd – who are promoting this year's ACU British SX championship at three venues across the UK – swing into indoor action.

And if you're real lucky you might get to see yourself on Sky TV as all rounds are being televised. The venues and dates are as follows. NEC Birmingham (**November 26**), Newcastle's Metro Arena (**December 3**) and Excel London (**December 10**).

To book your place please call Sonia Goggins at the ACU on **01788 566404**.

# CHAMPSCHAT

**THIS MONTH...SAM DAVIS**

**I**t's new feature time folks! The 2005 season has finally ended and to recognise the achievements of all 11 different champions in three separate series we're letting each rider have their own column for a month to say whatever they want and to find out a little bit more about our future stars.

This month it's BYMX 85cc small-wheeled champion Sam Davis – over to you Sam...

"Season's now ended so it's chill-out time, loads of rugby at school (I play full-back) and just enjoying myself now until the New Year. I've also had loads of homework so I've been flat-out with that really.

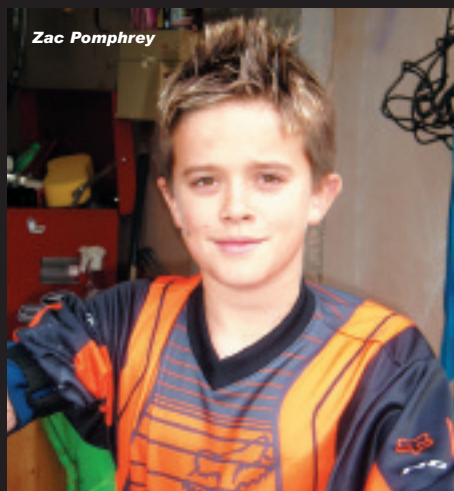
"I took a trip to Ireland to visit my sister's boyfriend's family which was nice and spent some time at the go-kart track racing Jonathan Reay the road racer. I also went to Sheffield to watch the supercross – there were some good races and the track was quite good but it was funny watching all the clubman riders as some were casing every jump with their legs and arms everywhere!

"I'm not doing much now on the bike until the New Year when we may take a trip to Belgium but that depends on the weather. I still haven't made any decisions on what bike I will be riding but it's between Suzuki and Honda but I need to test both to see which I prefer.

"Thanks to all my sponsors throughout 2005 and hopefully I can repeat the championship win next year on the big-wheeled 85cc."



Scott Elderfield will ride for PAR Homes/KRM Honda next season



Zac Pomphrey

# ZACATTACK!

**I**n motocross we're lucky enough to get all types of people taking part at all different levels – rich, poor, heroes and Suttys – but one lad stands out head and shoulders above everyone else and that's 10-year-old Zac Pomphrey.

Zac was born with no lower arm but the motocross-mad lad's been riding now for three years – you can normally see Zac zipping about the Tormarton track just off the M4 motorway and pretty impressive he looks too.

Zac's hoping to start racing in 2006 subject to getting a licence from the BSMA – everyone at dbr wishes him the best of luck and safe riding in the future.



Sam Davis



# RAY'S RIBTICKLER!

As you can see by this picture, when you get to a certain age you forget to do certain things – like sling on a pair of undies in the morning! Either that or our mystery man still thinks he's a young buck and went for the baggy look...



# COMMENT

**GOODNESS ME**, doesn't time fly! It seems like only yesterday that I finished last month's Rage and here we are again with December's mega issue.

The boss has been a bit edgy lately – not sure why but his last words were, "Oi, Chuss! I need Rage now, not tomorrow but now (that's the sanitised version – SL)!". Okay, okay, keep your hair on (what's left of it).

It's been a month of rumours and craziness and the place where most of it comes from is the interweb which has been lit up with some truths and some unbelievable nonsense, varying from our tracks are no longer motocross circuits to all riders should have to ride a very technical supercross circuit without any training first! Ouch!

So how many of you guys take a look on the net? Do you agree on what's being discussed on the various MX forums or do you, like me, take it with a huge pinch of salt?

Don't get me wrong, there are some real cool people out there but there are also what I would call internet riders – never ridden, never raced but know so much more than people who do...

Let me know your thoughts.

Until next time, safe riding and safe surfing.

*Chuss*

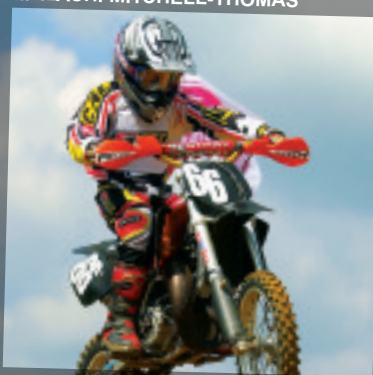
Got any youth news for Rage?  
Give Ray Chuss a bell on 07773 609994 or  
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JOSH BRINE



AGE: 11  
BIKE: KTM SX65  
YEARS RACING: 5  
KIT: ALLOY  
NUMBER OF TROPHIES: 34  
TITLES: 1  
BROKEN BONES: 2  
TRUCK/VAN: FORD MAVERICK

MALACHI MITCHELL-THOMAS



AGE: 10  
BIKE: KTM SX65  
YEARS RACING: 3  
KIT: SKIN INDUSTRIES  
NUMBER OF TROPHIES: A ROOM FULL!  
TITLES: 7  
BROKEN BONES: 1  
TRUCK/VAN: IVECO 49-12

# ALEX OUT

Top ACU 125cc rider Alex Rockwell from the Isle of Man has suffered a stress fracture to his thoracic spine that will put him out until the start of the 2006 season at least.

Alex, who makes the trip halfway across the Irish Sea on a weekly basis to ride all the top events here in the UK and in Europe, will undoubtedly come back stronger than ever and be looking for a championship-winning season in his final bash at the BYMX series.

Get well soon mate...







No! I am the spider!

# back passage

AFTER FINISHING AS RUNNER-UP IN THE WEC MORE TIMES THAN HE CARES TO REMEMBER, MANX ENDURO ACE DAVID KNIGHT FINALLY CAME GOOD IN '05 AND WON HIS FIRST WORLD TITLE. DOMINATING THE ENDURO 3 CLASS, KNIGHTER ALSO CAME CLOSE TO RECORDING THE PERFECT SEASON – GETTING BEATEN JUST ONCE IN 18 RACES.

## Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

**dbr:** *Congratulations on winning your first world championship Knighter. It's a month since you lifted the title in Greece, what have you been up to since then?*

**DK:** "All sorts. I've been really busy with one thing and another. From Greece I went to the final WEC race in Italy, which was great – a proper enduro. There was a big party after the race followed by another party the following day which was organised by one of the Farioli KTM team sponsors.

"Then I had the Scott Trial and a motocross back on the Isle of Man on the same weekend. I've always wanted to ride and finish the Scott. With the serious stuff of winning the world championship out of the way I just rode for fun. Getting on a ferry at midnight and getting back to the island at seven in the morning wasn't much fun though – I was knackered for the motocross. Other than that I've just been getting ready for some extreme and indoor events. Oh and going to dog handling classes."

**dbr:** *How does it feel to be Britain's only off-road motorcycling world champion in '05?*

**DK:** "It's a really special feeling. Everyone involved in motorcycle racing is after the same thing and there are loads of great riders in Britain. To be the only one that managed to win a world title is a bit weird but also a great feeling. I worked really hard this year, I've ridden well and have managed not to get injured so I feel I deserve my title. I'm not sure that it's really sunk in yet because I've been so busy."

**dbr:** *Because of going to dog handling classes you mean?*

**DK:** "Very funny...I wish I hadn't mentioned that now."

**dbr:** *This has been an amazing season for you – looking back does it frustrate you knowing you came so close to the perfect season?*

**DK:** "No, not really. Being the fastest rider in the E3 class on 17 out of 18 days is something I'm pleased with. When I got beat it was because I wasn't the fastest rider that day. I was thinking about the championship and Marko Tarkkala – the rider that beat me – was really on it. To be honest losing that one day took some pressure off me and gave me a bit of a kick up the arse at the same time. It made me work really hard during the six days and the last two WEC rounds."

**dbr:** *What's been the highlight of the season for you?*

**DK:** "I'd say winning the first race in Spain was special. I knew I was riding well before the race but until that first race is out of the way you never really know. After that the

six days was really special. I just went there wanting to win the E3 class but not worried if I didn't finish for any reason. Midway through the week when I was leading the Scratch it got a little more serious. Yeah, winning the ISDE is definitely the moment that stands out the most this season."

**dbr:** *There were almost as many Manx supporters at the WEC finale as there were Italians. What was it like to finally be able to perform in front of friends and family?*

**DK:** "It was the closest feeling I've ever had to racing a world championship event in Britain. There were so many Manx supporters everywhere I couldn't ease off at all – they were on every corner of the enduro test. I never realised just how much a good crowd of supporters can lift you during an event."

**dbr:** *As well as winning the ISDE and the world championship you had already won a load of indoor and extreme races this season. Which one has been the most memorable so far?*

**DK:** "I'd say Erzberg, in Austria. It's just an amazing event run in an amazing location. Winning the event on my first visit was great, especially as I beat Juha Salminen who had raced there before. The event almost means as much to KTM as the world championship so to win it in front of all the KTM bosses made it special. And meeting Travis Pastrana was cool. He's just a nice, normal guy who likes to ride his bike with his mates. Then, when he puts his helmet on, he becomes mental."

**dbr:** *You're heading to the US soon for a couple of races. Is that so you can enjoy some good weather or so you can earn some spending money before Christmas?*

**DK:** "Both really. I'm looking to have some fun, visit some new places and earn some money. I have one event in Texas and one in Las Vegas. I've never been to Texas before so that should be good, I'll be competing in a Red Bull-sponsored event called Last Man Standing. Then I'm gonna head to California for a few days before going to Vegas and the Endurocross. It should be a good trip."

**dbr:** *You got beaten by Ryan Hughes at the Endurocross last year – are you confident you can win this year?*

**DK:** "I'm not going to Vegas to finish second again. The Americans certainly ride hard, I learnt that last year, so I'm gonna give as good as I get this year. Hopefully that will be enough to win."

**dbr:** *What else do you have planned for the winter?*

**DK:** "I have a few more indoor and extreme events planned for the start of next year like The Tough One and an indoor or two in Italy. Before Christmas I'm hoping to head to Iceland to do a couple of days riding in the snow. The first round of next year's world championship is in Sweden in March where there'll be about a metre of snow so I want to be as best prepared for that as I can. I'm not sure what KTM has planned yet, apart from some engine and suspension testing in a couple of weeks. I guess a bit of a rest wouldn't hurt either."





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